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LAY SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

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LAY SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

*Delivered in the
Hall of Balliol College, Oxford*

BY

EDWARD CAIRD, LL.D., D.C.L.

LATE MASTER

GLASGOW

JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS

PUBLISHERS TO THE UNIVERSITY

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DEDICATED
TO
J. L. STRACHAN-DAVIDSON
MASTER OF BALLIOL
WITH ESTEEM AND AFFECTION

PREFACE

DURING my tenure of the Mastership of Balliol College I was in the habit of delivering a lay sermon, or address, at the beginning of each academical year, following thus, as far as a layman could, the example of my predecessors. A number of these discourses are preserved, and they are published at the desire of some of those who heard them.

EDWARD CAIRD.

August, 1907.

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LAY SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

THE TWO ASPECTS OF COLLEGE LIFE

- “BEAR ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. . . . But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; for every man shall bear his own burden.”

GALATIANS vi. 2-4.

THE moral life of man is so large and comprehensive a thing, it has so many sides and aspects, that whenever we attempt to give a fair and complete account of it, we seem to be driven to contradict in one sentence what we have said in another. So it is here: the new, Christian view of social duty which the Apostle was endeavouring to express, was not a thing that could be gathered into one simple proposition. It was, on the contrary, a very complex view, which united the two ideas which had hitherto seemed to exclude each other—the ideas of social unity and of individual independence. Christianity, in the Apostle's conception of it, was a principle that bound all men to each other, and made them members one of another, as no previous religion had ever attempted to do. It broke down all the walls of division that had hitherto separated individuals, families and nations from each other; it cast aside and utterly repudiated all the prejudice of rank and caste, of race and

custom, and bade men, as simply men, recognise each other as brethren. It sought, in the fire of its charity, to burn up every grudge and repugnance, every doubt and suspicion that had made men regard each other with alien eyes, and to put an end to all the waste of human existence in competition and conflict by binding them into the unity of one body, animated by one will and one spirit. Yet, while it thus sought to annihilate all sources of quarrel and division, it did not seek to crush or even to weaken the independent life of those whom it united. It did not desire unity at any price, but only the unity of accordant and consenting wills. Hence, while it endeavoured to eradicate the sources of disunion, its aim was not to impoverish but to enrich the lives of those whom it brought together. It sought rather to fill them with the consciousness of the supreme worth and greatness of human life, which is also divine life in every individual who partakes of it, and so to give to each one of them a new sense of individual independence and responsibility. Christians were to be one in spirit, zealous to serve the community, eager to pour themselves out in charity to their brethren, yet with all their readiness for self-sacrifice, they were to be free men, and not

slaves. They were not to make themselves the passive instruments of any foreign will, or to take truth from the lips of any extraneous authority. They were to obey only a power that was one with their own better self; they were to accept as true only a teaching that commended itself to their own reason and conscience. They were to live their own lives, to discover and accept their own duties, not clutching at any foreign support, or asking any one, any parent or teacher, any priest or prophet, to do for them that which could only be rightly done by themselves.

It was this double ideal of unity, brotherhood, passionate enthusiasm of humanity and readiness to give up everything for the weal of the community on the one hand, and of manly independence, free acceptance of responsibility, and willingness to undertake all the cares and difficulties of an individual life upon the other hand, that the Apostle was setting before the Galatians, when he told them, in one breath and with an almost epigrammatic sharpness of contrast, to 'bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,' and yet, at the same time, to 'prove each man his own work, because every man has to bear his own burden.'

This Christian ideal of the combination of

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social unity with independence, has, perhaps, never been completely attained in the history either of the church or of the world. For many centuries after the time of the Apostle, the growing tendency of the Christian society was to seek unity at the cost of the independence of its members; to bind the stubborn wills of men, and silence their resistant intelligences, by the *ipse dixit* of an authority which it was profanity to question. It was to secure at any price the unbroken unity of the Church. And when in a later time, at the Reformation, Christian men revolted in the name of Christ against this tyranny of the spirit, when they asserted the claim of the individual to prove his own work, and his duty to bear his own burden, it is to be feared that the other side of the Christian ideal was often lost sight of, or little regarded. Seeking to live their own lives, men withdrew into themselves and jealously guarded themselves each against the other. Repelling all claims of an authority from without, they became less solicitous to live a life of community with others; and, just in proportion as this tendency gained ground, something of the beautiful spirit of humility and tenderness, the all-forgiving, all-enduring, all-hoping spirit of mediaeval piety seemed to vanish from their

lives. Religion gave them a new strength of character, a new power of acting and resisting, but it did not so often melt their hearts together in a passion of self-sacrificing love. The result is that the double-sided idea of life which the Apostle contemplated has very seldom been realised. What we have seen, what we still see, is rather two types of character, which, though they draw their spiritual nurture from one religion, yet seem to attach themselves to its opposite elements, and therefore are inclined to repel and repudiate each other. The result is not satisfactory. On both sides the product is felt to be a pale and imperfect shadow of the humanity of Christ. A complete humanity, a complete Christianity, cannot be developed either by the spirit that produced the *De Imitatione Christi* or by the spirit that produced the *Areopagitica*, but only by both in one. When they are severed and opposed each tends to lose a great part of its virtue. We might perhaps use of them both the language of St. Paul, and say that neither the spirit of Protestantism, nor the spirit of Catholicism availeth anything, but a new creature. For the one is apt to render unavailing the union which it secures by its enslavement of the reason and will of man, while the other is

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apt to mar and even destroy the good of its emancipation in the isolation, the antagonism, the unbrotherly competition and conflict which it brings along with it.

Nor is this difficulty confined to the Church ; it is the great problem of the world also. We cannot look abroad on our political and social life without seeing that the one thing needful is to find some method of uniting what is good in Socialism, with what is good in Individualism. On the one hand it is to make men members one of another, without interfering with the free development of individual life, or with the vigorous struggle of interests, powers, and ideas, which is necessary to that development. On the other hand, it is to make men free, independent, responsible makers of their own lives, without wasting their energy on a ruinous competition, and narrowing their souls by mutual jealousy and hate. Everyone who is not the victim of an abstraction must recognise that each of these interests is essential to us, that neither can be pursued to the exclusion of the other, without losing much of its own value. Yet to find the true way of combining them in one, to see just when and where either becomes excessive because it tends to repress the other, to discover how to help men so as

not to weaken them, and how to call forth their individual energies without bringing about a kind of competition that makes them enemies instead of fellow-workers, is a problem not easy to solve, but upon the right solution of which, more than upon any thing else, must depend the future welfare of the nation.

It is, of course, impossible to enter here upon the many questions that arise out of this fundamental problem of social life, or to trace the various forms in which it presents itself in the life of the Church or of the State. What I wish is only to say a word upon the principle which St. Paul suggests for its solution, and then to point out how that principle applies to the narrower society of which we are members, that is, to the common life of a College.

Now, as regards the first of these points, it may be shown that St. Paul holds that there is no real opposition between the two ends of which I have spoken; that, in reality, they are not two ends, but one end viewed in two different aspects. It is indeed true, as I have already said, that they have often been practically treated as if they were essentially opposed; that men have sought unity in ways which involved the suppression of the individual, and the emancipation of the individual

in ways which involved the sacrifice of social unity. But the results show that each end when separated from the other, loses its own value and meaning. The unity that is secured at the expense of the individual independence of the members of a society tends more and more to become an external and mechanical bond, which binds together the bodies and not the souls of men. In a society so united, the intellectual and moral life of the leaders of the community does not flow out to all the members of it, and because it does not do so, it is apt to become narrow, dogmatic, and formal, even in those leaders themselves. And on the other hand, the independence which is sought in the isolation of the individual from his fellows, and which expresses itself in the doctrine that every one lives and dies to himself, that he is alone with God, and that no other person can touch the inner secret of his soul, is seen to produce a life which is narrow and unhappy, even when it does not cease to be a noble one.

A true society, as St. Paul maintained, is not one in which there is a rigid uniformity of thought and action in all the members, but one in which the utmost diversity of gift is used to manifest the same spirit. And true

independence for a being like man, who is essentially part of a greater whole, is not to be reached by shutting others out of his life—for he who shuts others out, shuts himself in—but by that widening of sympathy which makes the life and interests of others part of his own. Hence, the short cuts to unity and independence which have been taken by those who pursued either object separately, have been as deceptive as short cuts usually are. They have been found to be attempts to separate what are inseparable parts of one whole. They could not attain the partial good they seek, just because they tried to sever it from all other good. A society that does not liberate and enrich the individual life, and an individual life which does not go out of itself in love and service to the society of which it is a part, are both of them necessarily smitten with barrenness.

On the other hand, as Plato tells us in his *Républic*, the ideal society is one in which each has the opportunity to do his own work, and has his individual joy in doing it, just because it is the society in which no one does anything simply for himself, but only as the servant of the society. The desire to compass one's own good, and the desire to help others to their good, may be disjoined and opposed if we

look mainly to the outward, material goods of life ; but, if by attaining our own good we mean realising the highest of which *we* are capable, and by helping others we mean assisting them to attain the highest of which *they* are capable, it is demonstrable that neither desire can be fully realised until it becomes coincident with the other. In truth, we are bound so closely together that we cannot rise or fall alone. For most men, the influence of the opinion of their society is almost irresistible, though it is so continuous and unvarying that they are often least conscious of it when they are most passively yielding to it.

Any idea or tendency for which we find no sympathetic echo in those around us, seems to dry up and wither away ; whereas, when the impulse within us is reflected back from those without its force seems at once to become redoubled. For this reason, even great men are to a large extent limited by the social spirit of their time ; they are strong only as they do the deed, or speak the word, for which their contemporaries were waiting. "It is not the individual," says Goethe, "that can effect anything, but only he who unites with many when the hour is ripe." It is, so to speak, the reverberation of his first action, sent back to him

from the hearts of others, that enables him* to go on and do the second. No one can rise far above the society to which he belongs, because his advance is to a great extent dependent upon his carrying others with him. And it is equally true that no one can do great service to his society except by a process which enriches his individual life.

Can we, with any show of reason, apply this double lesson to the little society to which we belong? As the Greek philosophers attempted to prove that the good man and the good citizen is one, can we maintain that the good student is the good member of a College, he who contributes most to further the life of his fellows, and to help them towards the attainment of the highest collegiate life? At first it might seem as if this were not so in any very obvious sense. For the duty at least of an undergraduate in this place might in the first instance be described as a duty to himself rather than to others. His first object is, of course, to train his own powers and to store his own mind with knowledge; and in doing so, he is in a measure brought into competition with others. It might seem therefore, that he, if any one, had to bear his own burden, and leave others meantime to bear theirs; and, no doubt, there is a sense in which it is so. You have not

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here to undertake that direct care for others which must be laid upon all who have a responsible position in the world. And it would be the reverse of right so to occupy yourselves with works of charity, or with the furtherance of political and social objects, as in any way to neglect the nearer duty of self-culture. To undertake such work would be to anticipate life in such a way as to hinder your preparation for it.

But, at the same time, in University life, especially in the form in which it exists among us who live together in Colleges, this task of preparation is itself conjoined with a social bond of the most intimate kind. You are thrown into such close relationship with your contemporaries of the same College, that it is not possible for anyone to live entirely to himself. Here, as in the wider world, the two aspects of action, the social and the individual, are indissolubly united, and it is useful for us to realise, it gives a new sense of the value and meaning of our human existence to realise, that we cannot be our own keeper without also being our brother's keeper, and, I may add, that we cannot be our brother's keeper without being our own. For it is not by special acts directed to the welfare of others that we benefit them most, but by the tone and direction of our habitual

activities. It is by being what we are ourselves that we most deeply influence others. Everyone carries with him a certain moral atmosphere, which to a great extent determines the relations into which he comes with his fellow men. We all know this by experience. One man seems to bring with him a stimulating, invigorating influence, which produces a stir of life around him wherever he goes. Another has a timid and cautious way of dealing with men and things, and we are infected with a calculating and hesitating mood whenever we approach him. One has a genial gift of communicating himself to others, and in his society, we become able to express many things about which we are generally silent ; while another is reserved and self-contained, and his very presence seems to put us in a guarded, self-defensive attitude. One man is always ready to admire whatever is beautiful in thought and action, and we find ourselves drawn, as the Prophet says, "with cords of a man, with bands of love," to produce the best of ourselves in his presence ; while another is a trifler and a tale bearer, who is constantly prying into the vulgar or petty aspects of life, the infinitely little that clings about the outside of even the best that man can do, and in his company we find it difficult to resist the tendency to malicious or

half-malicious gossip. Thus men are continually shedding off, as it were, some part of their personality into the society around them. And the tone of that society is the result, not so much of the deliberate attempt of the members of it to influence each other, as of the unconscious action and reaction of their characters. Nor can any one easily measure how great his own contribution has been to the good or evil spirit that prevails around him, or how, by casual deeds or actions, or even looks, he may have influenced the lives of others. But we can verify it partly by considering how greatly we have been influenced by those with whom we were brought at any time into contact, even sometimes by those for whom we have no great esteem. We cannot keep the secret nobleness or meanness of our hearts to ourselves; silently and without our being conscious of it, the virtue or the vice goes out of us to weaken or to strengthen our neighbours, and the virtue or the vice comes out of them to weaken or to strengthen us. We do not carry on our warfare at our own charges; but the whole weight of the evil that is in our society is dragging us down, and the whole force of the good that is in it is helping us up. And, on the other hand, our own private victory or defeat inevitably produces

some rise or fall in the general spirit of the society, which will assist or hinder others in the struggle of their moral life.

These remarks apply especially, as I have said, to the society to which we belong. The College has been, and is for most of us, our first initiation in what may be called a free social existence, in which each in the main is responsible for himself, while at the same time he is brought into close relations with other members of the same society. He has to learn in his College how to bear his own burden, and in doing so he must at the same time learn to bear the burdens of others.

To help him in the first of these tasks, he has all that joy of youth which comes with the first sense of being master of himself, with the consciousness of his growing powers, with the first free draught of the well-spring of knowledge. To help him in the second, he has that power of ready sympathy, of making friends and of living in their lives, which only a few privileged natures retain after the period of youth is past. For as the years advance, we are apt to become encrusted, as it were, with the results of our own past; it becomes harder to assimilate new ideas, and harder to make new friends, to open ourselves to others, and to form really intimate relations with them.

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“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,” says the sad writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes, who has expressed so vividly the sense of the transitory sweetness of human life. “Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.” “Rejoice, O young man in thy youth,” we may add, not merely because it is then only that you can meet the world with the freshness of unblunted senses and untired feelings, for as these advantages depart, others as great may come in their place; but because youth is the great formative period, when the limits of your individuality have not yet become so definitely marked, when you are not yet fixed in any groove of professional habit, and when, above all, you still possess an almost instinctive power of communicating with each other, and, as it were, rooting yourselves deep in each other’s lives. Rejoice with the consciousness that it is the first step which counts, or at least that one step in youth is worth ten in later days; that you are now laying down the lines of a character which, in all probability, will determine the main purport of your own life, and of your relations with other men.

As members of this little society you have a great tradition to maintain—I do not mean of success in attaining University distinctions,

though that no doubt is a good thing—but of participation in the highest aims of the intellectual and moral life of the nation. Among your predecessors there have been many—I can remember not a few myself—who began in this College to show that love of truth and freedom, that interest in the national welfare, that sympathy with the needs and cares of others, which afterwards enabled them to widen the bounds of knowledge, to raise the moral tone of professional life, to maintain the honour and justice of England in dealing with weaker and less civilised races, or to bring help and healing to the hardships and sufferings of the poor in our own country. And if it is the few who do great and marked service in any of these directions, we have to remember that it is the spirit of the many that makes their efforts possible.

A man who has once lived in a society where the moral and intellectual tone was high, has by that very fact had his courage raised to attempt things of which he otherwise would never have dreamed. And all the members of such a society—especially when it is so small as a College—the least as well as the most notable, must contribute powerfully to help or to hinder the maintenance of that generous community of life, that fellow-

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ship of friends, of which Aristotle speaks, that free sympathy of those who have no aims of which they need be ashamed, in which all that is healthy and strong, all that is good and true in the character and minds of individuals, is sure to grow and ripen. It is dangerous to make prophecies about the future of any one; we cannot know what is hidden in ourselves, still less in others. But there is one promise which it is safe to make to anyone who is willing, in the sense that I have indicated, to bear his own burden and the burden of others during these College years: that all his life long it will be to him a permanent treasury of happy memories, a source of strength and sweetness amid the toils of his career, and a living bond, amidst all differences, to those with whom he has lived in this place.

May it be yours in the future to look back on your College days as a time of faithful and persistent effort to develop the powers which God has given you; a time of free and brotherly fellowship, of growing strength of mind and character, darkened by no remembrance of lost opportunity, or of any action unworthy of a gentleman and a Christian.

FREEDOM AND TRUTH

“YE shall know the truth, and the truth shall
make you free.”

ST. JOHN viii. 32

In an interesting note on the power of language, I find the late Master saying : "Every great word, Honour, Freedom, Truth, Faith, is a valuable inheritance, of which we must not allow ourselves to be robbed." What he seems to mean is that these words, Honour, Freedom, Truth, Faith, and other words like them, beyond their first definite meaning, are stored with a rich suggestiveness which is due to the great part they have played in the past history of man. They are like old battle-flags, every rent in which carries our minds back to the storm and stress of conflict which have concentrated around them, to the passion of self-sacrifice in which men have poured out their lives for their defence. They are permanent memorials that men have not lived by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God ; by ideals of action which have mingled with the struggle for the bread that perisheth, and turned it into a struggle for the bread that cometh down from heaven. Their width and

ambiguity of significance may sometimes embarrass us, and make us wish for the moment to get rid of such vague terms, and invent more definite and technical expressions for our moral ideas. But if we were to yield to this temptation, we should find that in doing this, as it were changing our old lamps for new, we had lost the magical, enlightening power which belonged to them, and in attempting to make our language more scientific, had really impoverished our thoughts.

In the text we find united two of those great words of which the late Master speaks, words which are loaded with a far-reaching power of historical suggestiveness. There are perhaps no words in the language which have been so variously interpreted, or around which the conflict of opinion has raged more fiercely; no words which have had greater power to call forth the energy and devotion of human hearts, or which, on the other hand, have more often been employed to give an ideal colouring to base and selfish ends. How many rebels against just law, or wholesome moral restraint, have masked their caprice under the name of liberty; how many fires of persecution have been kindled in the pretended cause of truth? And, on the other hand, what noble battles have been fought for the most sacred interests of humanity, which

were identified with these two names? We should blot out half of the heroic pages of history if we were to erase the deeds done, and the sufferings endured, for Truth and Freedom.

In the text the two words are used to throw light upon each other, and, as it were, to exclude the false interpretations which might be given to each taken by itself. That is Truth which makes me really free; that is the genuine and only valuable Freedom which is based upon the Truth. If a doctrine is found to enslave the souls and crush the energies of men, it cannot be a true doctrine: if there be an emancipation which is not consistent with the Truth, which does not come to us through or along with a better knowledge of ourselves and the world in which we have to play our part, it is licence and not true freedom. We cannot free men except by enlightening them, and we cannot enlighten them without setting them free. Ignorance of ourselves; ignorance of the nature God has given us, and of the fellow men among whom He has placed us; ignorance of the conditions of their life in this world, and of the good in which alone their human souls can find satisfaction, these are the chains that keep men in perpetual slavery. And if we could once *know* them, in the sense of clearly apprehending

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and thoroughly realising the truth about them, our chains would be broken.

What then is the kind of Truth that is here spoken of, and how is it attained? Again, how does its attainment make us free? Let us shortly consider each of these questions.

Of course the Truth meant is not mere information. In that sense, the wisest of men can only know a little; he has to content himself with being ignorant of all but a fraction of what is knowable. And, what is more important, true wisdom does not depend upon the extent of a man's information. There cannot indeed be wisdom without information, gathered from books and from communication with others, but such information is but the raw material out of which wisdom has to be extracted; and often a mind that is not possessed of any great store of knowledge, and whose experience is very limited, shows itself able to draw more light out of it, than others who have had a wide intercourse with men and things. Nor again is the Truth referred to the holding of correct doctrines in theology, or in any other subject. It has been one of the most fatal mistakes to regard such correctness according to some standard of orthodoxy as the root of the matter, and to suppose that the one thing needful was, by

whatever measures which might be necessary—by violence or constraint, by hindering men from speaking and thinking freely, by narrowing their lives, and so preventing the natural action of their minds—to confine them to one set of opinions. Opinions, however right, are mere prejudices, unless they spring from a living root in our own experience and thought. We have many opinions which have come to us, we might almost say, in our sleep—by imitation of those around us, by the fact that we have heard things said and never heard them controverted, or at best, by a superficial exercise of our understandings upon first appearances. Such opinions therefore sit upon us very lightly, and we could part with them without much loss or change. We should not feel diminished, nor would our lives be essentially altered, if they were turned into their opposites. There is, however, a deeper kind of conviction than this, which is continually forming itself within every man, and constitutes for him the genuine result of his experience; a conviction as to the real meaning of his life in this world, what is most to be sought for, and what is most to be avoided, what he himself would wish to be, and what attitude he should take up in relation to his fellowmen; a conviction which may be said to constitute his real religion or

to determine what he really worships. This conviction may not come readily to our lips, and indeed it often needs a kind of self-analysis, to which most men are very averse, to recognise it at all; yet it is continually shaping itself more and more definitely within us, and every act we do, and every serious thought we think, is a contribution to its growth. For with regard to it, we cannot adopt the usually convenient division between the intellect and the will, as if we could have a rightly judging understanding and a wrongly directed volition. Here rather the whole man is involved, and we move altogether if we move at all. Often it would be as true to say that a man's judgment is perverted because he will not look at the facts before him, as that he acts wrongly, because he has false conceptions of the world and of himself. And on the other hand, we may equally well say that his action is right because he knows the truth, or that he knows the truth because he acts rightly. In fact, it is the whole man that is here manifested both in thought and action, and his convictions and his character are but different aspects of the same thing. Thus the dim anticipation of truth, the feeling that some step is just and right if we follow it out in action to its consequences, grows into a clear

intelligence of the course of conduct that is suited to our nature and the society in which we live; and this new light as to our own true relations to society and the world makes the right course for the future more clear and certain, and less difficult to follow. On the other hand, the first dim consciousness of right when it is not followed out to its consequences, becomes dimmer and more uncertain; and in the darkness thereby produced, it becomes easier for our passions to mislead us, and make us lose all sense of the true proportions of every object of desire.

What so far I have been insisting upon is that everyone of us is continually by every action and thought building up within him a true or false view of his own nature and of the world, a view which puts him into a right or a wrong attitude to himself and to his fellowmen. Now, if we ask the secret of success or failure in this process, looking at conspicuous instances of either, what do we find? It is that success seems to depend upon a certain inward sincerity of soul, a willingness to apprehend the real facts of the case and to accept their lesson, upon a hatred of falsehood and illusion and a desire to stand in the clear light of day, and to understand the real meaning of the experience which life brings to us; while failure

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seems to be the result of a certain unwillingness to admit anything we do not like, a readiness to accept anything as true that flatters our desires, and an obstinate shutting of our ears to anything that opposes them. Thus often we are so full of self-consciousness, so persistently occupied with ourselves, that we will not listen to the secret voice which tells us that our own feelings are not the measure of the world. We are angry at some supposed slight; we allow it to darken our whole view of our relations to others and will not recognise how trivial a matter it would have seemed to us if it had happened to another. Or again, we are so occupied with our own joys or cares or sufferings, that we are practically unfeeling towards others, and pass by without notice the indications of important crises in their life, in which we might have greatly helped them, and perhaps would willingly have done so, had we not been so self-occupied, and unable to realise what was important to them. All of us recognise as we grow older that we have lived through great opportunities of good to ourselves and others, which we were too blind to see, because our personal fears, and hopes and passions, had, as it were, dimmed the atmosphere around us. "O ye hypocrites," said Christ to the Pharisees, "ye can discern the face

of the sky, but can ye discern the signs of the times?" At first it seems hard that men should be condemned for not having insight enough to discern the signs of the times, that is, to see what were the really important circumstances in their surroundings and what was the line of conduct, of thought and action, which would make them useful to their day and generation. But the justice of the condemnation becomes evident when we realise that such want of discernment is due, not to merely intellectual limitations, but to that lack of truthfulness of soul which alone makes a man open to the inner meaning of the facts before him. In truth, men often go through life only half awake, or seeing as in dreams only the pictures evoked by their own desires and feelings; and thus that which is most important in the experiences of their own lives is all but entirely lost to them.

Now what makes us responsible for this kind of blindness is, that we are never wholly blind. Each of us has the power of getting beyond himself and entering into sympathy with others; the power of setting aside his own sensations and taking in the real meaning of what is presented to us in experience. In fact, we all to a certain extent actually do get beyond ourselves, and

unless we did so we could not live in the world at all. We are obliged by the conditions of our life partly at least to overcome our natural tendency to make ourselves the centre of everything. We have continually in society to treat ourselves on equal terms with others, and we are constrained often to appear to do so when we are not actually doing it. Men cannot live the common life without lifting themselves, or striving to lift themselves, or appearing to lift themselves above the narrow limits of self, within which at other moments they so easily fall back. And to be truthful in the deeper sense of which I have been speaking is only to live more faithfully and consistently this common life, to get rid of that hypocrisy or duplicity which makes us have one standard for the world and another for ourselves, which makes us continually indulge in reservations in favour of ourselves, and refrain from the application of principles which we would acknowledge in every other case. The truth is thus not far from any one of us, it is in our mouths and in our hearts; it is present with us, unless we repel it and refuse it admittance; though sometimes we do so until it almost ceases to speak to us.

“This above all,” says the wisest of poets, “to thine own self be true, And it must

follow as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man." When can we say that we are true? Often we are in a sense sincere in speaking what we think, but not in the sense of keeping our minds really open to all aspects of the occasions in relation to which we have to judge and to act. "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom." There are often dark places in our minds, of which we are half conscious, but which we refuse thoroughly to search; and it is in these places that danger lurks, it is from these that impulses of which we were not aware suddenly make their appearance in the hour of temptation. We go to meet a new difficulty with an imperfect consciousness of its meaning and import, and in spite of our complete sincerity at the moment, we commit some vital error. To be persistently truthful with ourselves, to keep ourselves persistently open to all the teachings of experience, to listen to the enlightening word that comes from others with as much willingness to profit as if it were a thought that arose in our own minds, is the only way in which we can gradually learn to meet all the occasions of life with that instant, intuitive sense of the right act to do and the

right word to speak, which we sometimes experience in our best moments. But though our hearts are treacherous and our passions deceive, there is always for each one of us sufficient light to see the next step of duty, and, that taken, things become clearer and clearer. For our act has dissipated some of the shadows around us, and with a widening view of life our steps become more steadfast and sure.

We are now prepared to see the meaning of the assertion that the truth, such truth as I have been speaking of, makes us free. At first it might seem to do just the opposite; for he who is always endeavouring to be true to himself and to others, to keep his mind open to all aspects of the things and persons that affect him, and to measure his action by the demands of each occasion as it arises, seems to be constantly limiting himself, checking the spontaneous flood of his life and subjecting himself to an external law, which is at war with his natural impulses. And in a sense it is so. If it be freedom to live without rule, by the predominant impulse of the moment, then the endeavour to be truthful in the sense described is a heavy bondage; for it involves that we should look at our own desires and their objects in an impartial way, as we look at

the desires and objects of another. Nay, it demands more than impartiality, for it bids us substitute for the habit of mind that makes each of us to himself the centre of the world, a habit of seeing ourselves as we really are—as individual members of society who are nothing in ourselves, but derive all our significance from our position in the greater whole in which we are parts, and deserve consideration only in so far as we can contribute something to its life. It demands in short, not indeed that we should “see ourselves as others see us,” for the view which others entertain of us may often be as one-sided and distorted as our own, though in another way; but that we should endeavour to view our own life and our relations to others in the light in which we are revealed to ourselves in our clearest and best moments,—in those moments when the pressure of immediate passion is lifted from our souls, and all the disguises under which we hide from ourselves have fallen away.

All men have such moments of awakened consciousness or conscience, in which they see themselves and their relation to others in the true light and realise what, if faithful to their vocation, they might have made, or may still make of their lives; moments in which it seems

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a simple and plain thing to succeed, and almost an impossibility to fail in living the better life. But unless we can find some means of fixing these gleams of insight and turning them into permanent "lights of all our seeing," they rapidly vanish away, and, to use the striking image of St. James, we are like men beholding our natural face in a glass, who go away and straightway forget what manner of men we were. The tumult of the world, with its manifold appeals to our sensuous imagination, rushes in upon us again. The loud voices of our passions and prejudices, and the echoes they meet with in the passions and prejudices of others, drown the still small voice that has spoken to us so clearly; and we begin to live as before, from hand to mouth, by the casual impulses of the day, or at best by the calculations of worldly expediency.

"But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty and so continueth . . . that man is blessed in his deed."

"We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides.
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed,
May be in hours of gloom fulfilled."

The great problem of life is just to keep persistently before us the ideal of life, and especially of our own life, which is reflected back upon us in moments of self-revelation by that which the Apostle calls "the law of liberty"; in other words, it is to retain permanently the consciousness of the better self in subjection to which alone we can be truly free, because only in realising it can we be at one with ourselves.

In every other life we must be slaves, because in every other life we must be hypocrites, divided against ourselves, using double weights and measures, and hiding from ourselves the meaning of our own acts; because in short we should not be living in the full light of day, and with a clear consciousness of what we are doing. A divided life is a slavish life; and as we can never altogether cease to be men, or to have the thoughts and feelings of men, we can be at unity with ourselves only by conforming our whole mind and character to that which is the truth of our nature. On the other hand great is the sense of freedom, the peace and strength that descend upon the soul of him who has nothing which he wants to conceal from others, and still more, nothing that he wants to conceal from himself; who is persistently endeavouring

to bring the life of every day into accordance with the highest that he knows. Such an one faces the world as a free man, just because he has renounced the service of passion and vanity, and taken upon his shoulders the only yoke which in the long run is easy, because it is simply the yoke of being true to himself.

The lesson of the text is one that has special application to us as students, whose main work is to bring our thoughts into accordance with truth and reality in some one of the great departments of study. The acquisition of knowledge, even of wide and thorough knowledge, in any one department, does not indeed necessarily carry with it that generally truthful attitude of soul, that readiness to perceive and that strength to retain the true meaning of the facts of life of which we have been speaking. Still the student's life is one which above all is fitted to teach the lesson of the text to every one who faithfully pursues it.

How do we reach truth in any particular study? Is it not by having what Scripture calls a "single eye," an openness of mind and a willingness to conform our thoughts to the facts and laws of the region of knowledge which we are seeking to penetrate, a readiness to put aside our private fancies and prejudices, and a firm

determination to let none of them raise a mist between us and the reality?

In this sense, the temper of the true student is one of resolute docility, not indeed towards the words of his teachers—for it is far from desirable that he should accept *them* without reaction,—but towards the facts, ideas, and principles, of which their words and all words are but the imperfect expression.

Our success in study, *ceteris paribus*, is measured by our willingness, as Plato puts it, to follow the λόγος wherever it leads us, and to set aside all caprices and fancies of our own that stand in the way; by our carelessness as regards any originality of our own, and by our readiness to give the whole energy of our soul to the discovery of the exact fact, the exact law, the exact principle that holds good in any case. And the reward of such self-abnegation before the truth is a freedom and security of thought in that particular province, which is to be attained in no other way.

Now, this ideal temper of the student of any particular science is just the temper which, when it is extended to the whole of life, and especially to our moral and religious life, makes the true man, the man who will look with a single eye at all the problems which the world sets before him. Such problems are the choice

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of the particular study or profession for which he is fitted, the determination of his obligations to his friends or his family, the appreciation of the nature and meaning of the political life in which he has or is soon to have a share, the discernment of what is real and permanent in the religious teaching he has received, and its bearing upon his own practice. All these problems require for their solution an abnegation of the false kind of liberty which is caprice, because it is liberty from, and not in, the truth. And in all of them, this abnegation, this surrender of ourselves to the truth, is the one way to real freedom of soul, to that enlargement of view and undividedness of will, which lifts a man above the control of chance and circumstance, and makes him a potent influence for good on those around him.

If in your life as students in this place, you can learn this lesson—and at no later time of life can it be learned with the same thoroughness; if you can learn to carry the self-surrender, the docility, the eagerness to get at the real nature of things, which are necessary for success in the study of literature, or science, or history, or philosophy, into the whole of life, knowing that discernment of the general meaning of life is won by the same method as is necessary to the study of any part of it; if in this way

you can make the student grow into the man who loves light and hates darkness, then every acquisition of knowledge will be, not merely an intellectual gain, but a stone laid in the foundation of a strong character, and the preparation for a useful life.

Having looked into the law of liberty and found your true self therein, the world will not be able to make you forget what you have seen, or to enslave you to unreal and unworthy ends. You will be truthful men, not in the sense of a mere lip sincerity, but of that genuineness and simplicity of thought and will, which draws out that which is genuine and true in others, and repels that which is false or hollow. Being true to yourselves, you will find it become impossible to be false to any man.

In what I have said, there is one element which the text might suggest, of which I have not spoken. I have not spoken of any of the specially Christian ideas of truth of which St. John is treating in this passage. This is not because I do not consider these of importance, but because I have been trying to make you realise that religious truth is not something exceptional or essentially different from other truth. A man's real religion, whatever his verbal creed, is his attitude of mind and will to that which he

thinks highest and most real in life. What we mean by God, as Goethe said, is the best that we know. And Christians are those who believe that this highest and most real good of life has been set before them in the image of Christ. They are those who think that it is the meaning and purpose of our existence to bring about a state of Society in which all the members shall be working together in the spirit of Christ, in which no one is deprived of his share in the great heritage of man, no one is crushed under the wheels of a civilisation in which he does not partake, and everyone finds his appropriate place and work in the service of the common good. The world as a whole does not at present look much like such a society, and there is no family, or state, or church, or association of men, which is more than an approximation to it. But if we are Christians in more than name, we must believe that such a society is possible, nay, that it is what man was made for, and what certainly will be yet realised in the world. And the service of truth for us Christians must be to do our part in bringing about this ideal by making ourselves and others, as far as we can, fit to be citizens in such a Kingdom of God upon earth: a kingdom which, far off as it seems, is the desire of all nations, the earnest expectation and object

for which all good men now strive, and in the past, have been striving, and which perhaps is nearer to us than we think. For little as we have to boast of in the present state of things, there are more men *now* who are labouring and hoping for the realisation of it than there were in any previous age of the world. And such labours and hopes cannot be spent in vain.

SALVATION HERE AND HEREAFTER

“VERILY I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel’s, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren and sisters, and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions ; and in the world to come eternal life.”

MARK x. 29-30.

THIS word of Christ is preserved to us in a more complete form in the Gospel of St. Mark—which is now recognised by almost all critics of authority to be the earliest of the Gospels—than in any of the other Gospels. The others¹ merely say that he who makes such sacrifices, shall receive “manifold more,” or “a hundredfold,” and St. Matthew omits “now in this time.” I wish to speak about Christ’s assertion that he who surrenders earthly affections or earthly goods for the sake of God and man, will receive back, not an equivalent merely, but those very things that he has surrendered; nay, that he shall receive them back multiplied an hundredfold, or raised an hundredfold in value, and that he shall not have to wait for this till another world, but shall receive them back *now, in this time*. Even the words “with persecutions” are significant. Christ does not make the impossible promise of an earthly lot without its share of sorrow and pain; he does not say that a man can be faithful

¹ See Matt. xix. 29; Luke xviii. 29-30.

to the cause of truth and goodness without calling forth the active hostility of men. 'But what he does promise is, that we shall in a sense get back all, and manifold more than we have renounced, and *that* in the very forms of outward good and human affection which we have been willing to surrender. We have here, therefore, the great Christian paradox that we must die in order truly to live, that we must lose our lives in order to save them, and we have it stated in a more incisive and direct form than anywhere else. For we are told that the very desires and ambitions and loves which constitute our natural life and which we are called upon in some sense to renounce, are, as it were, to rise from the grave in which we have buried them, and to rise here and now, in this present world.

It is important that we should note these two sides of Christ's teaching, because, on the whole, the lesson of self-sacrifice is the more prominent side of it; and because for many centuries after Christ's time, it was the tendency of the Christian Church to dwell almost exclusively upon the renunciation of self, of all individual claims, of all the natural joys of life, rather than upon the idea of any satisfaction of those claims, or of any renewal of that life, at least upon this side of the grave. The Church did not, indeed, demand so

much from all men ; still it maintained that the only ideal life was that in which men withdrew altogether from contact with secular things, from all that sphere of existence in which rights of person and property, bonds of marriage and citizenship, family affection and national patriotism are the main interests.

In modern times a new reinforcement has come to this way of thinking, or at least to one of its aspects, from another side ; from a consideration of the evils of the régime of competition under which modern trade and commerce are carried on. A great deal has been said in recent times about the evils of the severe struggle for existence, and of the hardly less severe struggle for material well-being and social distinction. This struggle, it is pointed out, even under all the limits which law and custom lay upon it, sets individuals and classes in opposition to each other, and often results in the exploitation of the weak by the strong, of the poor by the rich. Much has also been said of the bad passions which competition is apt to awake, even when it rises to the highest form of a competition for honour rather than a competition for wealth or subsistence.

Further, it has been often pointed out by Tolstoi and others that the self-asserting, self-

aggrandising spirit which a competitive system presupposes is the direct opposite of that which is taught in the Sermon on the Mount, which seems to lay down for Christians the absolute law of self-abnegation and almost of self-effacement. Forgiveness of injuries until seventy times seven, refusal to assert one's rights against anyone who challenges them, a self-impoverishing generosity that effaces all the limits between *meum* and *tuum*, a self-contemning submission to the utmost affront and dishonour, even a fearless disregard of all personal prudence, or provision for the future—these, if we take the words literally, would seem to be the main characteristics of the followers of Christ. Give to him that asketh; Resist not evil; Love your enemies; Hide your good deeds from men; Lay up no treasures upon earth; Take no thought for the morrow.

It may be granted that in interpreting such maxims, we have to allow for the impossibility of expressing one side of the truth, without seeming for the time to neglect the other. But it is not easy, with the utmost extent that we can give to such allowance, to combine these rules with the common code of Christian respectability in our day; or to deny that they give some support to those who have maintained

that at least the ideal of the Christian life is to be found in that absolute surrender of personal feeling, personal right, and personal honour, which has been specially entitled the religious life. And it can hardly be doubted that it was by the power of this absolute self-sacrifice understood in the strictest sense, that the great preachers and saints of the Church produced that startling revolution, by which the standards of worth and value in human things have been almost inverted, and the Cross turned from the badge of disgrace into the highest symbol of excellence. It was a Christianity that carried these rules out in their sternest form, which first distinctly raised the universal good above every particular good of kinships or nations, and set up the love of God, conceived as one with the love of man, as the deepest and highest motive of life; and at least a large proportion of the efforts that have been made to ameliorate the lot of humanity, from the time of Christ to the present day, have been animated by this spirit.

On the other hand we cannot deny the force of many of the arguments which have been brought against the moral ideal of Christianity, when conceived as the literal following out of such principles. In the first place, against the bare condemnation of competition it is con-

tended that, in great part, it is competition that has actually drawn forth and educated the powers of man ; and it is competition of one kind and another by which, for the most part, it has to be determined what their powers are, and what place they are fit to occupy in the social organism. How can we discover what a man, or a class of men can do, except by letting them try ? And yet such trial seems necessarily to involve an assertion of their claims in opposition to those of others. To say that the strong man is to make no use of his strength, or the able man of his ability, to win for himself or those in whom he is interested any personal advantages, is it not to "muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn ?" Is it not like bidding us dam up the forces upon which human progress depends ? And the case becomes still more serious when we consider that such competitive efforts of each individual to win the goods of life are closely connected with the satisfaction of those primary affections by which men are made the members of families and kinships ; and that the abnegation of self-assertion, of the assertion of personal rights and privileges, and of all far-seeing regard to future maintenance or success, which seems to be involved in the literal following of the rules of the Sermon on the

Mount, means also the abnegation of all special care for one's household or kin, or even for one's country.

These natural affections are all personal and exclusive, and, as such, they have necessarily in them an element of antagonism to those whom they exclude. Yet in them, it is maintained, our morality begins; they are the means whereby we are first drawn out of ourselves, and taught to recognise the claims of others. And to call upon us to renounce them for a wider affection, —for the pure love of God and humanity,—would, in the majority of cases, be to destroy the very influences that make the development of such a wider affection possible. To bid men in general, before they have experienced, or even before they have had full experience of the exclusive affections of parent and child, of husband and wife, of friend and friend, of citizen and fellow-citizen, to give up all the joys of what Aristotle calls τὸ ἴδιον καὶ ἀγαπητόν, the joys of having something peculiarly our own and *some one* who draws out an affection that has a sense of personal property in it; to bid them live in charity with all men, or with a wide circle of human beings who have no special claims upon them, and on whom they have no special claims, would, it is argued with much force, be to tear

up the very roots out of which humanity must grow. How is it possible by a direct and immediate act of the individual himself or of others, by the imposing or accepting of a vow, to turn a man, with all the hungers and loves that spring out of his manifold being, into the abstract organ of a benevolent purpose? There are, indeed, a few selected spirits,—and it is well for mankind that there are such,—who cannot, even from the beginning, find their true sphere except in a life devoted to general interests, a life of philanthropic self-denial. And there are others, a greater number, who rise to such a life gradually, as the result of a long experience of narrower joys and sorrows. But for most of us—it is contended, and there are not wanting facts to support the contention—for the generality of men, the attempt to live such a life would be a fatal mistake; it would narrow instead of widening their minds, it would harden instead of softening their hearts. Indeed, the effort “thus to go beyond themselves, and wind themselves too high,” might even be followed by reaction to a life more profane and self-indulgent than that of the world in general.

Nay, further, it is urged, that if such a moral ideal *were* attainable by all the members of a human society, it would not be the highest and

best for them to attain; for it would empty their lives of the manifold interests which in spite of their conflict with each other, enrich and elevate the individual. What we really want is, not the extinction, but the purification of such interests, not the destruction of the natural impulses, but the filling of them with a higher spirit. Suffering and sacrifice are valuable as means of discipline, — means necessary to the liberation of the spiritual forces within us, and few or none of us could be morally developed without them; but they are only means and not ends. Ultimately, it is “more life and fuller” that we want, and not restraint and mortification. Asceticism, if it were the last word of our morality, would be meaningless self-torture: at best it would be rather an evasion than a solution of the problem of the existence of beings like ourselves.

I have thus put before you two views of the moral life which have often been opposed to each other in the past, and which even at the present day are often brought into conflict with each other. In fact it may be said that ever since the beginning of the Christian Era, if not earlier, there have been two moralities in the world which it is not easy to reconcile, and which at some periods have stood out against each other in sharp and even startling antagonism. We

inherit many of our moral ideas from the later part of the period we call the Middle Ages, and we can see that there were then in existence two codes of conduct with distinct rules and observances : the one accommodated to the ideas of an ascetic priesthood, and finding its highest expression in the life of the monastic orders ; the other based upon the traditions of a military and aristocratic society, whose highest ethical conception was expressed in the maxim that "*noblesse oblige*." These two ideals of life existed at the same time, and it is the picturesque contrast that arises from their partial realisation which constitutes the main source of the romantic interest we find in that period of history. On the one side the Saint, or hero of the church, as we might call him, was one who, by an absolute act of renunciation, had cut himself off from all the ordinary objects of human desire and ambition, that he might live entirely to God ; one who was persistently striving after an unearthly purity of soul, who was ready to bear all wrong without retaliation, and who sought to overcome the hostility of men only by patience and love. On the other side, the hero of the world was one who did not renounce, but rather idealised, the impulses of nature. He was one who lived for love and ambition, who was trained from his

earliest years to assert himself against all rivals, to yield to no enemy, to endure no slight, to do all, and bear all, for the sake of personal honour. Shakespeare gives us the natural utterance of such a character, when he puts into the lips of his ideal king, Henry the Fifth, the words :

“I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost ;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear ;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires :
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.”

This is the ideal which finds its expression in the legends of King Arthur, and which has been presented to us, in a softened and purified representation, in Tennyson's *Idylls*. And it is reproduced in a somewhat modified form in the ordinary code of honour under which we are all expected to live.

These two ideals, as I have indicated, are still with us, though we do not often find them in the sharp and definite form which they took in an earlier time, but rather in some more or less satisfactory combination or compromise. The pure ideal of chivalry is modified in so far as the growing bonds of civic and national life have partly freed the pursuit of honour from

that individualistic and even selfish character, which formerly belonged to it. And the same causes have tended to make Christians cease to be content with that general love of humanity, which showed itself mainly in religious teaching and works of charity, and have made them seek to make religion a source of improvement and elevation to the natural life of family, city, and nation. Thus the two extremes have been brought nearer to each other by that silent process of development which gradually changes our sentiments, and moulds into harmony the various tendencies that move us.

It is desirable however that we should consider what this process of reconciliation means, and what claims each of the two opposite ideals of conduct have upon us. For there cannot, after all, be two independent principles of morality; though the great diversity and complexity of human life make the application of the one principle very different in different circumstances, and must therefore produce great variation in the types of human character. It takes many kinds of men to make a nation, still more a society of nations; and the special obligations of the individual must vary very greatly with his country, his class, his occupation, with every difference of outer circumstance or inward

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capacity. But the idea that there are two moral laws of life, one for the men of one class, and another for those of another, one for clergy and another for laity, is one of those prejudices which, we might almost say, Christ came to abolish. For it was the essential character of His teaching that He held out the highest ideal to every one. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," was not addressed to a special religious class, but to all who claim to be followers of Christ. We must therefore find, and I think we may find, in some of the words of Christ Himself such as I have chosen for my text, the key to this apparent antagonism of moral rules.

Now, it would not be possible in what remains of this short discourse, to enter upon all the questions involved in this great subject, but there are a few practical considerations, which might be laid before anyone who feels difficulties about it.

In the first place, to those who feel a difficulty in reconciling the Christian ideal with anything but a life of such self-denial and even asceticism as was undoubtedly identified with that ideal by men like St. Bernard, or St. Francis, I would point out that the sharp opposition between secular and religious motives, which was drawn

by these men, was partly forced upon them by the disorganized and chaotic state of the world at the time. In many parts of Europe at least, society was then broken up into fragments, and even these fragments seemed to be held together by the victorious force of individual leaders, rather than by any real social bond. Hence, no moral power appeared to stand between the conflicting chaos of individual wills and the universality of the church. In such circumstances, the choice might seem to lie only between self-will and self-sacrifice ; or, at least, between the maintenance of a merely personal honour or a personal loyalty to individual leaders on the one side, and on the other the absolute surrender of all individual desires to the impersonal aims of a universal church.

But the development of national life, of ordered freedom and social unity, has led us to see that, though general philanthropy, the love of man as man, is a good thing, though even in a sense it must for Christians be the basis of everything else, yet a great part of its value lies in its making its own direct exercise unnecessary, by giving rise to a better order of family and state, by filling all the particular relations of our domestic and civic life with a new spirit, and binding all individuals and classes

together as members one of another in a united social brotherhood.

Mankind thus ceases to be conceived as a mere mass of units, saved one by one out of the present evil world. Men are regarded rather as integral members of a national society in which each individual and each class has its appropriate place and work. And if we still hold, as all Christians must hold, that even the nation is not the limit of our charity, but that ultimately we must estimate the national state as a means to the highest life of humanity, yet humanity is no longer conceived by us as a mere aggregate of individuals, but rather as a growing social unity, a family of nations which, in spite of their differences and oppositions, are very gradually, but still certainly, being drawn together, and made into the members of one organism, a world community, in which each has a special function to discharge.

We are therefore learning to substitute for a vague cosmopolitanism, for a vague impersonal philanthropy, the idea of an organism whose parts are bound to each other by domestic affection, by civic and national patriotism, by a multitude of special ties and affinities which reach beyond even the limits of the nation. It is true that this still remains in great part an idea ;

for though there are many interests of science, of literature, and of commerce, which have become cosmopolitan; though the influence of the opinion of one nation upon another is continually increasing, and tends to make the unity of mankind an effective bond, yet we are still far from anything like a world-state, or even a confederation of nations, which can suppress and overpower their mutual jealousy and hostility. And even among the members of the same nation, the divisions of class from class are often so strong as almost to overcome the sense of national unity. Still, in spite of all this, the idea of unity is continually gaining ground, and there is an increasing desire in the best men of all nations to strengthen and invigorate the feeling of brotherhood and solidarity, both within their own narrower community and without it. That is the aim which the best of us are now pursuing, and which all must therefore one day pursue; for the spirit of the wise and good is a prophetic spirit.

With this increasing desire to make our national and our human brotherhood real, there grows an increasing resolve to make it real *here and now* in this world. We are not content any longer to make low demands upon this life, and to regard it simply as a passage to another;

we are not satisfied with a gospel of despair for this world and hope for the next, any more than we are content with the Greek doctrine that the best things in life are for the few, and that the rest must be their instruments or slaves. This enormous demand upon life made by all, and for all, is one of the most startling facts of our day ; and many look upon it with no little alarm, fearing on the one side that the desire for pleasure, for sensuous and intellectual enjoyment, may quench the spirit of love and self-sacrifice, and fearing on the other side that the effort of all to participate in the good things of life may lead to some dreadful socialistic overturn in which even the goods that are now possessed by mankind may be lost. We must recognise the danger, but nevertheless we may find in this great demand upon life, and especially in the fact that it is a demand for all, and not for some, a ground of hope that a better day for humanity is dawning,—a day in which our morality shall be felt less as a mere restraint and more as an inspiring power, and in which religion shall cease to be to many only a consolation for defeat in this world, and become a living faith in the coming of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

The truth then seems to be that Christianity,

in the natural process of its growth, has brought, and is more and more bringing to us a new lesson, which was hid from the wise and prudent of past times and is now revealing itself, we might say, even unto babes. Truth, and especially the truth of Christianity, is a complex thing, and its meaning could only be unfolded part by part in the long process of history. What it revealed to the early Christian centuries, and all through the Middle Ages, was mainly the necessity of an absolute surrender of self to that which is recognised as good. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee"; "Let the dead bury their dead"; "No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of Heaven." Christ had to say such words as these if He would teach to men the first indispensable lesson of morality—the lesson of self-sacrifice which is the beginning of all moral life. And they are words which have a permanent truth; for to every one of us, in the course of life there must come a time, or it may be, many times, in which this hard lesson has to be learned; a time in which, as in the fabled choice of Hercules, we stand between good and evil, between our better and our worse self, and have to make the election. And if the right choice could not be made without trampling

on our strongest ambitions and desires, without sacrificing the best things of our social and intellectual life, if it could not be made without the cloister or the hermit's cell, it would not be too great a price to pay for moral freedom and moral influence.

One can see that the absolute renunciation of monks and priests was a great weapon for good, in a time of violence and license, when the Church could contend with the world only by being its direct opposite. In such a time, even if asceticism had not been believed to be the higher life, one can conceive a great and good man adopting it, in order to make his protest against the iniquities of the world more effective. But it is not less true, that such a life, if regarded as more than a stage of transition, was the pursuit of a false ideal—an ideal which could not be taken as good for mankind in general. Nay, we may even say that in a deeper sense it was distinctly un-Christian, though it could appeal to the literal meaning of many words of Christ. For if Christ taught that we must die to self and the world, it was in order that we might live, and in a sense, live to both. If He said, "only he that loseth his life *can* save it," He also said that "every one that loseth his life, *shall* save

it." And in the words of the text He does not leave this saying a vague promise of some kind of unearthly life hereafter, but tells us that the same personal ambitions or personal loves which we have sacrificed, or been ready to sacrifice, will come back to us enriched and ennobled.

Humanity learns its moral lessons slowly, and it is probable that men could hardly have discovered the full meaning of such utterances, unless the idea of self-sacrifice had first been deeply impressed upon them, and acted out in its utmost extremity of meaning, in the life of many an ascetic saint. They have laboured and we have entered into their labours; and one of the main results is, that we are beginning to see that there is another side to the truth than that which was most prominent to them, and that in the Gospels there are at least many indications of this other side.

It was natural that the early and mediaeval Church should in great part neglect such indications, and lay all the emphasis upon the lesson of self-sacrifice, till it almost came to be believed that no one could really and fully fulfil the law of Christ without becoming a monk. But taught by the long experience of the world,—an experience, which if it has shown anything, has shown the essential imperfection of the monastic ideal,

the unfitness of it for all but exceptional individuals, and the unsatisfactoriness of its results, even at the best (in so far as it leaves many elements of humanity altogether undeveloped),— we are prepared to draw a new lesson from the old text. We are prepared to recognise that the highest realisation of Christianity means salvation here as well as hereafter; not the renunciation of house and home, of property and marriage, and of commerce, science, and literature, but the infusion of a new life into them all.

This truth is one which is constantly repeated to us, by, we might say, all the highest voices of our time, by all our great imaginative or reflective writers. Nor need we fear that we are in any way forsaking Christianity in listening to them; for true Christianity is not something that was once published in Palestine, and which has been handed down by a dead tradition ever since; it is a living and growing spirit that learns the lessons of history, and is ever manifesting new powers and leading us to new truths. And the truth to which it is leading us in this generation seems above all to be this, that the Christian must not live mainly for another world, and seek to reach purity by escaping from earthly interests and affections; but that the way to salvation here and hereafter lies in a deeper

understanding of the wonderful world in which we are placed, and a higher conception of all the ties, material and spiritual, that bind us to our fellow men.

In other words, we are learning to look both upon nature and human nature with a new reverence. In regard to the former, it may be pointed out that the most original vein of poetry which has been opened up in modern times, is that which teaches us to find beauty not only in flower and tree, or in familiar phases of animal or human life, but even in the wildest and most irregular forms of cliff and mountain, or the stormiest manifestations of natural forces. Poetry has, so to speak, conquered a new realm for the sense of beauty. It has made us admire many objects which were once regarded as formless and graceless; it has idealised for us many provinces of nature, which were formerly conceived to be repellent and void of charm. And it has done so, by teaching us to see in nature the expression of the same spirit which gives its highest value to the life of man.

Further, the same impulse that has enabled modern poetry to find a divine meaning in nature, even where former generations have been blind to it, has also quickened it to find a divine meaning in human life, even in classes and

occupations, in humble joys and material cares, which formerly were regarded as sordid and vulgar, and almost, as we might say, beyond the charity of the imagination. And the same change is daily remoulding our ethics and our religion, making us cease to be content with a gospel which regards the earth as a wilderness through which we advance to a better home, and which consoles with the hope of heaven those who are deprived of all the material and spiritual benefits of life.

Such consolation, indeed, will no longer be listened to, if it be all that we have to give; for, as I have said, the demands of men upon life are continually growing in width and intensity. And if, as I believe, there are as many now as in the past who are willing to sacrifice themselves for others, they are not content, and rightly not content, without seeing their reward in the improvement of the earthly life of those around them, in purer and more noble relations of men and women in the household, in the higher honesty and justice of our politics and our commerce, in the growing refinement of the manners and the elevation of the morality of our people, and in the opening up of intellectual enlightenment and aesthetic enjoyment to all those who are capable of them; in short, in the realisation

of the Kingdom of God among men in this present world. We are far enough from the realisation of such a heaven upon earth, but it is something that we have come to want it, and to refuse to regard anything else as satisfactory. We all of us want it, the best men among us are striving for it, and it may almost be said that, in proportion to their goodness, is their belief in its possibility.

We may admit that belief in its possibility is hard, perhaps the hardest of all things; while it is easy to idealise the distant, the far-removed in time and space, the exceptional. It is easy to think of some heaven of bliss and charity, realised in another world than this :

“In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
That men call Earth.”

So in regard to our own life, it is easy for us to believe that we could rise to that which we think best and highest, by some great change in our circumstances, by doing something which sharply separates us from others, by adopting some strange and abnormal way of living. To believe that we can, here and now, make our lives ideal, that the round of duties that seem commonplace and secular,—these family ties, this

college companionship, these professional occupations of law, or education, or commerce, these civic and political relations,—furnish the very environment that is needed for the realisation of the highest of which we are capable, that is the most difficult of all things. We form an ideal picture of some better state of the world, in which the commonplace and secular aspects of life have no longer any room and duties are at once more heroic and more easy, forgetting that there is no act but derives its character, its greatness or its pettiness from the spirit which manifests itself in the doing of it. The only world worthy of being regarded as ideal is that which carries within it the present world with its meaning understood, and its worth deepened. It is our own world given back again, item by item, with all the elements that constitute it multiplied a hundred-fold in value, raised to a higher spiritual power : and it is realised, not without effort nor by leaps and bounds, for it comes ‘with persecutions,’ but by the more faithful and full performance of the duties, commonplace as they may seem, of the station in which we stand.

May you, then, find in our life in this College the greatest of all the gifts it can offer, namely, that sensitiveness to the call of present duty and

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that deep consciousness of the worth and dignity of obedience which shall prepare you for the sterner and broader duties which the practical service of mankind, and through mankind of God, brings to all who prove worthy of entering upon it.

ADDRESS ON QUEEN VICTORIA'S JUBILEE

Delivered in Balliol Hall on June 20th, 1897.

It has seemed desirable that on this Jubilee Sunday I should try to express some of the thoughts that naturally arise in our minds in connexion with this culminating period of the long reign of Queen Victoria, which includes the whole life of nearly all of us, and all but the whole life of the oldest of us. Such a season naturally carries our minds from the present to the past, away from the concerns of our own individual existence to the great community from whose wider life our own springs, by which it is nourished, and to which it must be a contribution. The Queen's name is suggestive of that which unites us, of the common traditions and common hopes that bind us together in spite of all differences of profession and rank, of all rivalries of interest, of all oppositions of character and belief. And it is her great distinction that she has always realised this, always had the self-restraint and wisdom to know that as she represented some-

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thing more permanent than even the great men who have been her ministers, she was bound to rise above the sphere of party,—that she has always made the chosen representatives of the nation, of whatever party, feel that they had her loyal support in the discharge of their high functions, and that she has steadfastly sought to find ways of exercising her great influence in furthering those general interests of the community which tend to draw us together.

She has so well understood her position as the sovereign of a free people that no one suspects or is jealous of her power. During a blameless life in which, as maiden, wife and widow, she has shared all the great personal joys and sorrows of humanity, she has ever identified herself with her people and made their joys and sorrows her own. She has been prompt to recognise everyone who has done distinguished service to the country, and ready at all times to sympathise with any grief or loss that has fallen upon any class of her subjects, or even, so far as might be, upon individuals. Therefore, in offering our tribute of congratulation to the Queen, we can feel that we are not uttering words of official homage, but expressing our loyalty to one who, throughout

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a reign extending beyond that of any British sovereign, has been a worthy representative of the nation's unity, and the centre of honour for all that is best and highest in its life.

In looking back over the sixty years of the Victorian era, we are forced to remember many great crises in which the nation has been sorely tried,—by wars which, though in the main successful, have not been brought to an issue without great suffering and loss; by a great rebellion in one province which severely tested the resources of the kingdom; by famines which have brought disease and death to great numbers of the subjects of the empire; by civil dissensions and controversies which have been so bitter that they seemed even to endanger the national unity itself; by commercial disasters, the effects of which have been felt in almost every home, and especially in the homes of the poorer classes of the community. Yet, on the whole, we can look back upon the Queen's reign as a period of growth and expansion in almost every direction,—a time in which wealth has increased and has also become more equally distributed; in which science has made advances paralleled in no previous era of the world's history; in which additions have been made to the stores of English literature, rivalling even those of the

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Elizabethan era ; and in which great activity of literary, historical and philosophical criticism, while it has brought about a freedom of thought and speech such as hardly existed in any previous age, has not weakened but rather strengthened the moral consciousness of the nation, and I think also, in spite of appearances to the contrary, has not undermined but rather deepened and widened its religious life. The omens of the future are not indeed unambiguous, and no one can look either to the outward fortunes of the empire, or to the many changes in the inner life of the people which the growth and diffusion of knowledge are bringing with them, without doubts and fears. There are also many deep-seated evils affecting the common weal, which should keep far from us any tendency to boast of our civilisation or our achievements. No one can think without grave misgiving of the evil and wretchedness that lurk in our crowded cities, of the hardship and destitution that still survive alongside of the greatest wealth which any people has ever accumulated, or of the vulgar ambition and greed that darken our political and social life. Still, if the dangers are great, the power to combat them does not seem wanting. And judging by fair criteria—by the deeds of courage

and self-sacrifice which often thrill us with sacred joy in our recent military annals; by the justice and truthfulness and simple sense of duty which often makes our civil service so successful in the government of uncivilised races; by the public spirit not seldom shown in our municipal life as well as in the wider sphere of imperial politics, and by the readiness of many of our citizens to devote their best energies to public or social duties connected with the education, or the health and general welfare of the community; judging by the (at worst) greater efforts made in the present generation to raise the life of the poorer and less privileged classes, and to make them, not mere servants of a civilisation which they do not enjoy, but, as far as may be, partakers in the great heritage of man—judging by all these signs, we may say that we are still the members of a living nation, a nation which has not yet fallen from the great position it gained in an earlier time.

What is it to be a nation? In one sense we cannot look upon a nation as living for itself alone. No nation can now be shut up in itself as some of the ancient nations were, to pursue to the end its own peculiar work, and to develop to the utmost its own peculiar type of civilisation.

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Each nation is continually giving forth influences to and receiving influences from the other nations. Science and, even to a certain extent, literature have become cosmopolitan, or their national aspect has become subordinate and secondary. Still, though humanity has become more to us and national life no longer runs in an independent channel as it once seemed to do, we are not to suppose that the national idea has lost its power, or that the springs of national patriotism have been dried up. The national state is still the highest organised whole, the great ethical unity to which our services are immediately owing, and it is in the main by acting with and upon it that we can serve humanity. Hence we may fairly say that our actual morality is concerned primarily with the nation-state to which we belong, and that the duties of man are still to us mainly the duties of the good citizen. It is about as true now as it was in the days of Thucydides and Sophocles that when our country is strong we are uplifted with it, and that when it is humiliated or lowered in power and influence we are all humbled and put to shame. And, on the other hand, it is the contribution which we make to its being and well-being that, on the whole, measures the worth of our individual

lives; for even when we have directly to give aid and furtherance to the lives of others than our countrymen (as is often the case in an Imperial nation like ours), it is through the great public services of the country or through other national organisations that the most important work is done. Furthermore, it is the sense of belonging to a great people, the sense that all we do is done for it, which oftenest elevates and, as it were, idealises our work, whatever it is. How many of our countrymen in hours of danger and difficulty have been moved to the greatest sacrifices and efforts by the thought that they were in a sense their country's representatives, charged with the care of its honour, and pledged by the trust it has committed to them to make the name of their nation a guarantee for truth and justice? And when the greatest of our sailors, in the supreme hour of his life, sought for a word that would steel the hearts of his men to his own heroic temper, he could find nothing more effective than a simple appeal to this feeling: "England expects that every man will do his duty."

I think that in this place we have special opportunities of learning the great lesson of civic solidarity and civic service. Already in

the Public School and still more in the College, many of you have been put in a position to realise what it is to belong to a society, in which free companionship is combined with such subordination to law and authority as is needful to secure the ends of the society, in which the rivalries of life are kept within limits by the spirit of community that removes from them whatever is ungenerous, and in which each one may learn to be sure of his fellows on condition that he learns to make his fellows sure of him. That at least is the spirit that should animate a college like this, as it is the spirit that has animated it in its best times in the past. It is this combination of independence with mutual trust that has once and again saved our countrymen in India amidst the greatest dangers. And it is what struck Emerson, a keen but generous observer, in his attempt to estimate the best points of our national character. "The intellectual organisation of the English admits a communicableness of knowledge and ideas among them all. An electric touch by any of their national ideas melts them into one family, and brings the hoards of power which their individuality is always hiving, into use and play for all. Is it the smallness of the country or is it the pride and affection of race? . . . They have solidarity

or responsibility and trust in each other. In politics or war they hold each other as by hooks of steel. The charm in Nelson's history is the unselfish greatness: the assurance of being supported to the uttermost by those whom he supports to the uttermost." I think this is true, if it is taken, as it must be, rather as a description of that to which our countrymen rise at their best, as an ideal which is realised in our best statesmen and soldiers and public servants, and to which many others make an approximation. It is a spirit which, so far as it goes, makes a nation strong beyond any possible computation of their numbers; for it makes them able to call upon each other for great efforts with the certainty that their call will be answered, and advance to the greatest enterprises with the certainty that they will be supported. If we could imagine a whole people of whom all the members should be of this temper, there would be scarcely any limit to the development of its life or its influence. But such qualities have to be practised in the family and the school, in the college and the civic society, if they are ever to win predominance in the larger field of national life.

So far I have spoken of patriotism as a bond of men with each other. But the bonds of men

with each other have always derived their main strength and confirmation from the belief that they were based on a common relation to God. Patriotism is apt to become boastful and weak except when it goes along with the consciousness that the nation has a vocation with which it has been intrusted by that higher power—a vocation that has moulded its character and history, in fulfilling which alone it can maintain its true life, and secure its well-being. Neither men nor nations can exert their highest energies in the pursuit of an aim which they have arbitrarily selected for themselves. Great achievement is for those who feel that they have not chosen their path, but that it has been chosen for them; that something divine, which is not themselves and yet is one with their better selves, has ordered their steps and given them their task to fulfil. With such a consciousness alone can there come to a man or a nation the inspiring faith that their cause is one which cannot but succeed in the end, because it is the cause of God; and that even its enemies by their utmost resistance are only preparing for its ultimate victory. For such a faith failure is never final, but a call to purify the spirit of our efforts, in the certainty that when there ceases to be any hindrance in ourselves all other hindrance will disappear. "The deepest, nay, the

unique theme of the history of the world," says the wise Goethe, "to which all other themes are subordinate, is the conflict of faith and unbelief. All epochs in which faith prevails—whatever its form may be—are noble, soul-elevating and fruitful for the present and for after times. All epochs in which unbelief, be it under what form it may, wins an unhappy victory, even though for the moment they are invested with a deceptive halo of glory, vanish and are forgotten by posterity: because no one willingly wastes his pains on what is barren and unfruitful."

Such an inspiring faith cannot now be associated with national patriotism in the exclusive way in which it once was so associated. We have learned from Christianity to regard national life as part of something wider than itself: we cannot feel like those for whom heaven seemed to be their steadfast ally against all their foes; whose God, indeed, was almost an embodiment of their national unity; and who regarded all other nations as without any human or divine right against them, if not, indeed, born to be their servants. Men's eyes in early times could not reach beyond the ties of blood: if they believed in a God they must think of Him as first of all the father and protector of their race; the Lord of Hosts who went forth with their armies. Christianity takes

away all such claims of special privilege, and bids us put the cause of God and humanity in place of the cause of God and the nation. At the same time we must remember two things: in the first place, that Christianity springs of a national religion, and that it does not reject, though it transforms its original. The New Testament carries us beyond the Old; but the Old Testament is its presupposition, and that which is necessary for its interpretation, if the universality of Christianity is not to be torn away from its proper root. In the Old Testament we see how the faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob gradually widened into the belief that Israel held its privileged place just because through it all the families of the earth were to be blessed; and how this again prepared the way for the advent of a religion which taught that God is the equal God of the whole earth, the God and Father of all mankind. But this new conception did not altogether obliterate the idea of the special vocation of the Jewish nation. St. Paul tells us that it was the advantage, or privilege, of the Jew that to him were committed the oracles of God; or, as we might express it, that it was the national work of Israel to nourish and develop to maturity the religious sentiment of mankind, and to give it its most intense and vivid expression.

And there were some of the great teachers of the church who extended this idea beyond to other nations: they maintained that, among the preparations for the Gospel of humanity, we may reckon not only the ethical monotheism of the Jews, but the culture and philosophy of Greece, and the military and the legal discipline by which Rome subdued the nations into one empire of peace. The Greeks and Romans also were chosen peoples and their worship, it followed, was not devoid of elements of a true religion. Thus Christianity might be regarded, not as rejecting, but rather as absorbing the religious life of the nations—as a main river of human life to which all the separate streams of national existence and national feeling were tributaries.

But, in the second place, we are not to think that with the advent of Christianity, religion became universal in such a sense as to exclude for ever any special national piety, everything that connects the worship of God with the life of the national state. For a time indeed, it seemed as if this were the case—as if all national limitations of religious faith, all the local colour of religion, if we may use the expression, had passed away under the influence of the all-embracing rule of Rome, and of the lesson of human brotherhood taught by Christianity. And

this view prevailed as late as the fourteenth century, when we find Dante still dreaming of a world-state, a universal empire, which should be the secular counterpart of a universal church. But already at that time the forms of the new nations of Europe were beginning to emerge, with their distinctive national speech and national character. And it became clear that, though the wider bond of humanity could never again be lost sight of by Christendom, yet it was not destined to exclude, but only to give a new meaning to, the ties of nationality; and the Reformation, in one of its aspects, was a proclamation of the right of each nation to mould its own destiny, and the forms of its own religious life. We can now see that this change was inevitable, through the very development of Christian ideas themselves. Thus Christianity, born of national religion, became in its turn an inspiring power in the life of nations which were struggling for religious liberty—nations which in their struggle could never entirely forget their unity and relationship, but which, partly by their rivalry, and partly by their co-operation and continuous influence upon each other, were to feed and develop the richer and more complex life of the modern world; and which may, one day perhaps—if we could anticipate the distant

future—become federated and combined into a greater, because freer, unity than the Empire of Rome. The great task of civilisation—the task of realising Christianity upon earth, not by withdrawing men from the ordinary relations of life, from the family and the State, from trade or science, or from the pursuit of social and economical well-being, but by permeating all such relations with the Spirit of Christ—has, as it were, been divided among the peoples, to each of which a separate part has been allotted by the genius of the nation, and the historical conditions of its life. And thus each nation can carry into its separate sphere of action the sense of divinely-ordained vocation, and of a work peculiarly its own, in which it cannot fail so long as it is faithful to the trust committed to it.

What is the part that England has allotted to it in this great movement? With one very great difference, there is something in it which reminds us of the work of Rome in the ancient world, as indeed in some of the best types of our national character, there are traits that remind us of the consuls and generals of the great imperial city. Favoured by their insular position, the British people were among the first in Europe to attain the unity and solidarity of

a nation ; and they were one of the first of nations to throw off allegiance to all powers which might limit or suppress their national independence in secular or in spiritual things. It is worthy of note that one of the earliest of those who have been called "Reformers before the Reformation" was an Englishman, and one whom we claim as a former head of this College. Nor is it without significance that the great struggle for political freedom in this country was led by men who drew much of their inspiration from the Old Testament—that sacred fountain of the spirit of nationality and national religion. And both within and without the Church of England, this country has continually insisted upon giving to its religious life, a form corresponding to the tendencies and wants of the nation. This free religious spirit is one of the main causes why England outstripped all other European countries in its political development, and became their teacher in the methods of free government. It has, indeed, been the great champion of freedom among the nations—the champion of an order of life based, not upon the repression, but upon the liberation of man's energies, social and individual. And once and again it has stood forth almost alone, or has been the centre of resistance to powers which were on the way

to gain a predominance in Europe that might have been fatal to its intellectual and political development. Protected by the sea from the heavy external pressure to which many continental nations are subjected, it has by the sea been brought into relations with the most distant parts of the world, and drawn into the career of commercial adventure. Through its colonies, it has become the mother of free nations, and at the same time the great subduer of uncivilised races. And if its earlier dealings with such races have been often marked by a covetous or ruthless spirit, it has not failed—has not hitherto failed—in the long run, to extend the blessings of civilisation and of equal justice to those whom it has brought under its rule, and eventually to open up to them all the privileges of its own sons. It has been, in the main, the enemy of slavery and oppression in every form. We may claim for it what Claudian claims for Rome that it has been, not a despotic mistress, but a fostering mother of those whom it has conquered.

Not with false pride, but rather with the sobering consciousness of a great vocation, we may venture to realise to ourselves the greatness of the nation to which we belong, and of the national traditions we inherit. In the old Romance of Amadis de Gaul one of the knights

suddenly discovers that he is the brother of the great hero, Amadis, and exclaims with a kind of awe at the responsibilities of such kinship, "Now is my life in greater danger, for I *must* be like him." This is the true spirit in which we should regard the great inheritance we have received from the past. We should feel that we cannot and dare not let it pass to our successors either lessened or tarnished.

The need for the highest qualities of national patriotism in the English people is perhaps as great as it ever was before. There are many signs in the recent course of our history—in the misadventures which have overtaken us, not without our own fault, in the hostile feelings often expressed toward us by other nations, and in the changing circumstances of the time, to which here, I cannot do more than allude,—signs that this country may in the future have to stand as severe trials as ever it has encountered in the past. In these circumstances there may be a demand made upon us—and I think the demand will specially come upon those who have enjoyed such advantages as you are enjoying here—a demand for energy and wisdom, for justice and courage, for a pure and self-forgetful patriotism, as the essential conditions under which alone England can maintain her place among

the nations. And any lowering of the standard of political or social life, such as some think they discern among us, would undoubtedly in such a time of trial bring upon us the greatest losses and dangers, even if, as we might hope, the purging fires of suffering should ultimately purify our weakness, and re-awaken the ancient spirit of the nation.

Assuredly this country needs all the virtue which it ever possessed to meet the requirements of the strange new time in which we live. And in a sense it needs it more than ever : for—and this is a thing which in this seat of learning we need above all to remember—in this scientific age the tasks of civilisation cannot, as perhaps was once the case, be performed by untaught energy, guided only by a wholesome routine and an easily learnt tradition. We need, especially all those of us who may be called to positions of leading and responsibility, to reinforce whatever natural qualities we may possess by the discipline of a good education, which familiarises us with the best things in literature and science, trains our minds to thorough and accurate thinking, and prepares us to understand the physical and moral, the economical and social conditions upon which successful achievement must henceforth depend. We need to “add to our faith knowledge,” to

the tact and energy and natural capacity for affairs in which this nation has never hitherto been found deficient, that comprehensive view of facts and that deeper insight into the laws which rule them, which can be attained only by a study of the methods and results of science. For the new time has tasks which, though perhaps not calling for the exertion of higher moral qualities in the crisis of action, yet make a demand for a more thorough preparation and education beforehand. We cannot any longer go to face our Goliaths with a sling and a stone, but only with the full armour of the trained soldier, who is able through long practice to wield all the weapons of civilisation. The spirit we need is the same as that which built up the nation in days gone by : but it must show itself in the new ways which alone can be effective in an age when it has ceased to be possible for mere force to do much, except as the servant of a thoroughly well-educated and well-furnished intelligence.

There is one thought with which I should like to conclude, a thought suggested by a short poetic utterance of Browning, which seems to have risen to his lips, as his ship was borne past some of the scenes of England's greatest sea-fights.

"Nobly, nobly, Cape St. Vincent to the North-west
died away ; •

Sunset ran, one glorious blood red, recking into Cadiz
Bay ;

Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar
lay ;

In the dimmest North-east distance, dawned Gibraltar
grand and gray ;

'Here and here did England help me : how can I help
England ?'—say,

Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise
and pray,

While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa."

These lines seem to express the true spirit of patriotism. Let us, for our part, resolve that it shall not be in the spirit of boastfulness that we shall commemorate the great names of our fathers, or visit the scenes in which they did their mighty deeds. Let it be rather ; "*Here and here* did England help me : how can I help England" in the great tasks that lie before her in the future ? Help England to maintain the spirit of justice in all her dominions, to labour for the liberation of mankind from the heavy yokes that still oppress them, to smite down cruelty and wrong throughout all the vast sphere of her influence, to maintain the cause of the poor, and make them sharers in all the benefits of human existence from which they have been

shut out, to heal the wounds and divisions of the nation, and bind all classes together in the sense of common citizenship; and, in all ways, to do what we can to make the spirit of Christ, the spirit of charity and truth, prevail upon earth. For it is thus only that we can *help* England.

THE NATION AS AN ETHICAL IDEAL

“IN that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah ; We have a strong city ; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in.”

ISAIAH xxvi. 1, 2.

October 17, 1898

THE Old Testament may fairly be called the Gospel of nationality as the New Testament is the Gospel of humanity. Not that the two things are essentially opposed to each other. On the contrary, the one grows out of the other, and it is the Messiah to whom the hopes of Israel pointed as their consummation, who is also the author of the universal religion. And, on the other hand, the universal religion could not realise itself, could not show its real efficiency to invigorate and purify the lives of men, except by re-awaking the social impulse which binds them in families and nations. The passion of cosmopolitan charity which animated the early church and kindled a pure flame of zeal in the hearts of saints and martyrs, could not really regenerate the life of the modern world or fill the new civilisation with its idealising power, except by consecrating and giving its sanction to that natural and historical process by which the nations of Europe have gradually organised themselves, each with its own peculiar instincts and traditions,

each intrusted with a special task in the complex work of human progress. Thus our Christianity, with its universal gospel of love and its enthusiasm of humanity, may be said both to spring from national life and to reproduce it from itself in a higher form. I wish in this address to speak to you a little further on a theme on which I spoke to the College last year on the occasion of the Queen's sixtieth anniversary, on *the idea of nationality* and its place in our lives as an ethical and religious principle.

A nation, in the full sense of the word, seems to be at once a product of nature and of the human will. It is composed of men who are of one race, or who, if not of one race, have lived together so long, entering so fully into every kind of free relation with each other that they have overcome all the immediate impediments to intercourse, and are able in the most important things to feel with each other and understand each other's feelings. Aristotle said that a city ought to be composed of such a number of men as could hear the voice of one herald: we may say that a nation ought to be composed of men who, however numerous, can feel the throb of one emotion and one impulse of life, and who by such community are at once differentiated from other nations and brought into living and

organic unity with one another. But in order to make this possible, more is needed than a mere bond of kindred : there is needed a common history, the memory of great deeds done, great trials undergone, great experiences of sorrow and joy encountered together. Thus the saying : "Happy is the nation which has no history," is almost self-contradictory : for a people without history can never rise to any real national unity. The ties of nationality have generally been welded not in peace but in the storm of battle, not in rest and enjoyment but in much effort and suffering. A nation is not born in a day, nor without the long and severe throes which attend all spiritual birth. It is a slow and continuous struggle with the natural obstacles of its position, with other nations, and with the elements of division in itself, by which a people gradually grows conscious of itself, of its independent life, and of the line of thought and action which is peculiarly its own.

And this leads me to the last point, namely, the national idea, or vocation, or distinctive tendency,—however we may choose to name it,—which makes the character of the nation and gives unity to its history. A nation is not a mere aggregate of men, nor even an aggregate linked by natural ties and a common history : it is a

unity at once real and ideal, a spiritual body, whose principle of combination lies in some common direction of activity, some common objects of pursuit, which may often be sought almost unconsciously, but of which it grows more and more definitely conscious as it goes on. A nation has, to use a much-abused phrase, *a mission*, a work assigned to it to do by its peculiar fitness to do it, in doing which it becomes great and strong, in failing of which it becomes feeble and unstrung and loses its place among other nations. All outward power and powerlessness follows, in the long run, faithfulness or unfaithfulness to such a vocation: so that we may justly say that a nation is not strong or influential because of its outward resources, but that it possesses these resources because it has been true to itself. And on the other side, all the outward strength which a nation may show is but a deceptive result of former greatness that will soon pass away, if it has no higher aims in view than mere material success:

“Winds blow and waters roll
Strength to the brave and power and deity:
Yet in themselves are nothing. One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the soul
Only, the nations shall be great and free.”

It is the way in which it illustrates this lesson

of the meaning of nationality, that gives its greatest value to the history and prophecy of the Old Testament. We have there recorded, in a typical case, the process by which a nation gradually formed itself out of a confederation of tribes till it came to the consciousness of its unity under a national king: how, after some years, it broke up again into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah: how both kingdoms were gradually hemmed in and crushed by the greater powers of the East: how in defeat and captivity it tenaciously clung to its national life and its national religion: how Judah was by the policy of an eastern despot restored to its native territory, and for a short time even attained to a certain measure of national independence, till in the progress of events it was absorbed in the advancing empire of Rome: and how, even under that empire, and in spite of the failure of its last revolt, this people retained, as it has retained till this day, its distinctive national character.

If we ask what is the secret of this extraordinary vitality of the Jewish nation which, in spite of the fact that it was only for very brief periods able to maintain its independent existence, has made it almost the typical instance and embodiment of the principle of nationality,

I think we must find it in the fact that to the Jews, as St. Paul expresses it, "were committed the oracles of God." In other words, they were in a peculiar sense a religious people; we might say *the* religious people *par excellence*. By this I mean that not only—as was the case in all ancient nations—were there certain religious beliefs which were bound up with the existence of the community, and which formed, as it were, its ideal centre, but that their religious consciousness showed an extraordinary capacity of growth. Every change in the nation's circumstances reacted upon its religion, and caused it to put forth new spiritual powers. National prosperity enlarged its spiritual outlook, national distress and apparent ruin deepened and purified the tone and temper of its piety. This people showed at once wonderful tenacity and wonderful power of adapting itself to new conditions, nay, of turning these conditions into the means of farther development.

I can only refer to one or two points in this great history. The beginning of it is pictured to us as the "call" of Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, and I will make of thee a great nation." A small patriarchal community separates itself from its neighbours under the strong reli-

gious impulse of its head, who seeks in the wandering shepherd life to maintain a purer worship of his God than was possible among his kindred. Whatever criticism may say to the historical character of our records, it has only brought into clearer light the traces of a recurring and ever-deepening religious insight and emotion, which we see in its germinal form in such stories as those of Abraham's sacrifice and Jacob's wrestling with the angel. Following the course of history we see how the growing clan of shepherds, under the oppression of Egypt and by the struggle for freedom under Moses, another great religious leader, was disciplined into a warlike confederacy of tribes, in which the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, came to be regarded as the Lord of Hosts, the God who was manifested in the thunders of Sinai, and who led the armies of Israel to the conquest of the promised land. We see how the fitful gleams of inspiration which visited one or another leader of the tribes culminated in the great religious revival under Samuel, the first of the prophets, and how this again led to the distinct concentration of the tribes into a national state under a national king, who was also a great religious poet (though it is probable that most of the Psalms which have

been ascribed to his name belong to a later date). The glories of the house of David did not last very long, but the memory of the time when Judah and Israel were one people, idealised by distance, became an object of long-ing regret and hope, which formed a very important element in the national consciousness. And that consciousness, bound up with a still higher religious spirit, found expression in a peculiar order of religious teachers, the prophets, who softened, elevated and universalised the stern worship of the Lord of Hosts, the God of a people of warriors, till it became the worship of a God of justice—a God who, if He favoured His chosen race, did so on moral grounds, and with a view not merely to their outward welfare, but to their moral discipline; and if He was in any special sense the God of the seed of Abraham, yet gave them their peculiar privilege that through them all the families of the earth should be blessed.

The keynote of this ethical monotheism, as it has been called, is already struck by the shepherd-prophet *Amos*, when he gives his remarkable interpretation of the privilege of Israel: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: *therefore* will I punish you for all your iniquities." Their election is for

suffering, for discipline, for the discharge of a special duty rather than for the enjoyment of a singular happiness. It is the same Amos who expresses such undoubting faith in the fresh stream of divine light and inspiration, which was opened up for himself and those who were like him: "Surely the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." And this privilege of the prophets—they themselves soon began to declare—was ultimately to be extended to every faithful son of Israel, nay, to every faithful son of man: "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." Under such tuition Judah, deprived of her heritage, tolerated only as a dependent of greater political powers, becomes a kind of *Church*, a sacred nation whose nationality has become altogether identified with its religious consciousness, and—partly, just because it has ceased to be a state and is no longer entangled in the compromises of practical politics—stands out as the representative of an absolute law of righteousness, protesting in the name of God against all the injustices of the world, the oppression of the poor and the

lawlessness of the rich, believing always that behind the shows of this passing world there is a divine deliverer, who in His time will come to redress all wrongs, and heal all sorrows. On the other hand, the same nation that thus stood out as the champion of the faith that *what ought to be must be*, and one day *will be*, also produced at a later period those psalms, in which all the movements of religious feeling, doubt and belief, hope and fear, aspiration and repentance, have found such consummate expression, that even Christian piety has not been able to improve upon them. We can hardly wonder that it was out of such a nation that the religion of humanity was born. But what I wish to emphasise at present is how the greatness of the nation was bound up with its persistent holding fast through good and ill to certain central ideas of its own vocation as the chosen people; and how also this faith became in nobler minds more and more tinged with a consciousness that it was chosen not for itself, but for the sake of all mankind.

Now Christianity undoubtedly carried out this movement to its natural conclusion. It put an end to the exclusive claims of any nation to be *the* chosen people, and to the conception, so prevalent in antiquity, of the deity, as a national

God who was indifferent or hostile to all other nations. Indeed, during the early Christian and the mediaeval periods, it seemed as if the very idea of nationality was to be extinguished in favour of the idea of a universal church, with a universal empire as its necessary counterpart. It seemed as if the mere bond of a common Christianity was to take the place of all natural ties, which were regarded as more or less secular and profane. But such a breach between the natural and the spiritual world could not be maintained, in view of the central doctrine of Christianity itself as to the unity of the divine and the human. And the history of the modern world has been the history of the growth of independent nations, each with its separate characteristics and its separate province of activity, each maintaining itself and pursuing its interests sometimes in co-operation with, sometimes in opposition to the others. The community of Christendom, indeed, has to some extent survived. It manifests itself in the universality of the forms of science, and art, and literature; in the close interconnexion of economical, social, and political interests; in the tendency of European nations to league together against any excessive and oppressive power, or for the maintenance of

peace; in the increasing influence exerted by the public opinion of nations upon the external, and even upon the internal policy of each; in the progressive limitation of the barbarities of war, and of the rights of the conqueror. At the same time, we have to recognise that we are a long way off from that community of life, that universal kingdom of peace, which the wisest of men have longed for and prophesied; and that for us still, as for the ancients, the highest really organic society, the greatest actual ethical union that exists is the national state. Cosmopolitan charity is still in the main an individualistic thing, a thing that shows itself in the relations of individual man to man, and not in the creation of a real society of mankind. And for most of us, in far the greater part of our lives, the service of man means the service of the nation, the discharge of the duties of our stations. Not that we can dispense with these services or neglect these duties: for, in any case, we have to remember the words of Green: "That there is no other genuine 'enthusiasm of humanity' than one that has travelled the common highway of reason—the life of the good neighbour and honest citizen—and can never forget that it is only a further stage of the same journey."

It is most important that we should realise this, for, in spite of all our modern desire to make religion practical, there is often lurking in our minds a subtle tendency to divide the secular and the sacred, the church and the state, religion and politics. The great danger of our ritualism and sacerdotalism on the one hand, and of some of the interpretations of what is called evangelical religion on the other, lies not in what they are in themselves, but in the fact that they are apt to cause us to lay the emphasis on the wrong place, and to make us think that the truly sacred part of life lies in some special acts of religious service or in some form of emotional religious experience, and not in the simple duties of our station. We need, indeed, almost all of us, special times for thought, for worship, for the realisation of our relations to God and man. It may be that some of us cannot maintain in our hearts the altar fires of religion without the aid of hallowed form and ritual. But the moment we begin to make these things ends in themselves or to separate them as a higher class of duties from the work of our profession and the ordinary obligations of our domestic, social and political life, we are on the way to desecrate our natural existence by dividing the spiritual from it, to lose the value of that *power of idealising* which is the

salt of our life, sanctifying it and devoting it to higher issues than life itself. .

This lesson has many applications, but I wish now to look at it specially in relation to our subject: to consider how our morality and religion are bound up with our national life, and how we also may claim to be a *chosen people*, with a special part to play in the great work of civilisation and of Christianity. If we go back to the beginnings of our history, we find that many racial streams, Latin, Celtic and Germanic, with the subordinate varieties of Danish, Saxon and Norman, have contributed elements to the nation, and, though these and the very varied conditions of our development have led to the formation among us of manifold types of individual character, yet, on the whole,—penetrating and prevailing over these differences,—there are certain very definite lines of tendency which have fitted the British people for a special task. Owing to their insular situation, they were protected from many disturbing influences which have affected other nations, and they were one of the first peoples of Europe to acquire a distinct national consciousness and to enter on the path of an independent national development. It is noteworthy also that the reaction against the levelling and oppressive power of the Latin church began in England with Wickliffe (and

is thus specially associated with this College). And it was in this country also that the great movement towards political freedom was first initiated; indeed, it was carried to a considerable point of advance, when it had hardly begun in any other country. The close military organisation, which was necessary in the rest of Europe, never existed here, and, in consequence, there was from an early time at once greater liberty for individuals and a more ready reaction of the opinions of the people upon the government. At the same time, with this freedom of the individual and as the complement of it, there has gone a great facility of association, a great readiness to combine for social, political and other ends, and to subordinate personal prejudices and desires to common action. It is perhaps not too much to say that this country first showed to the modern world the immense power that lies in the associated action of free citizens, and proved that its greater vitality, its combination of subordination with independent initiative, makes it more than a match for the mechanical drill of despotism. These qualities have found at once their appropriate field of action and the means of further education in the sea,—in the life of naval enterprise, into which we have been drawn by our situation. We have become the great colonising

nation, and the nation that has shown the greatest power of gaining the mastery over uncivilised races. And if our dealings with these races have too often been initiated in greed and violence, yet undoubtedly these have in the long run given place to an effort, such as perhaps hardly any other nation has made, to make our government tend to the good of the governed, and to open to the governed all the privileges of their governors. In this way commerce with us has generally gone hand in hand with civilisation. Yet, while we have thus been the great practical nation of the modern world, this does not mean that we have been altogether a materialistic nation, a "nation of shopkeepers" as Napoleon called us, devoted entirely to the pursuit of power and gain. It is true that, with the exception of the movement of Wickliffe, we have not been the originators of any of the great religious movements of the modern world; but in no country has religion been more closely associated with the whole movement of politics, in no country has the old Hebraic view of national life taken deeper root. And, though we cannot say that the nation has shown so much susceptibility to philosophical ideas or aptitude for reflective thought as some other nations, yet it may safely be said that no other European people has made greater contributions

to science, and no other can point to such a broad and continuous stream of imaginative literature as that which has flowed in this country from the Elizabethan to the Victorian era.

“It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which to the open sea
Of the world’s praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed ‘with pomp of waters, unwithstood,’
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
Which Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held—In everything we are sprung
Of Earth’s first blood, have titles manifold.”

While thus indicating the nobler aspects of our national life, we must not forget the darker side of it: the insular narrowness, the ruthless aggressiveness, the unreasonable contempt for everything foreign, the tendency to sacrifice all things to material aggrandisement, the mingling of higher and lower motives, of gain and gospel, which have often caused us to be accused of hypocrisy by other nations. A nation is like a man who fluctuates between the ideal to which he rises in his best moments, and the caricature or

perversion of it to which he sinks when he is, as we say, "left to himself." It is England's faithfulness, on the whole, to the former that has gained her her great place and influence in the world; but too often the power and wealth which have been the prize of valour and self-sacrifice, have tended to become to her, ends in themselves. Every nation is continually undergoing the trial which is pictured for us in the story of Abraham's intercession for Sodom; and divine justice is asking how many righteous men are to be found within it, to be the saving salt of the community, and maintain in it the consciousness of its high vocation. As Brunetto Latini says to Dante in the *Divina Commedia*: "If thou follow thy star, thou canst not fail of a glorious haven," so it may be said to every member of the English nation. If you keep true to the best traditions you have inherited, if you give yourself to your country's service and at the same time keep before your eyes the ideal of your country, as it has been realised by the noblest of its statesmen, by the bravest of its soldiers and sailors, by the purest of its priests and teachers, by the most inspired of its poets, it cannot but be that you also will do something to make the name of England honoured and to maintain its place among the nations.

Patriotism is a high sounding word, with which we are apt to associate a certain unreality and sentimentalism. And, on the other hand, when we get beyond this, we are apt to think that it means: "My country, right or wrong!" No one, however, can be excused for saying this; for he is not only a servant but a member of the nation, and has in his degree some responsibility for the direction in which the country is moving, as well as for the kind of service that is given to her. Of course, a subordinate must obey orders, and cannot always be responsible for their expediency or rightness; but every one is in his degree not only an instrument but a representative of the nation; and *his* justice, *his* courage, *his* regard for mercy and truth, will be an important factor in determining the way in which England stands to other nations. There never was a time in which there was greater need, among those who enter the public service, for true patriotism, for a supreme sense of duty to the nation from which we draw our life and which lives in us. Signs are not wanting that days of trial for the nation are coming, trial both from without and from within. On the one hand, many of the old bonds of our society, the ties of loyalty that formerly united the different classes to each other, are becoming

loosened. The power of custom, which no doubt often acted as a check upon energy, but which also did much to keep men together, is sensibly diminished. The desire for enjoyment, the hunger for both the higher and the lower goods of life, has become keener, more general, and less restrained by repressive influences of public opinion. Moral and religious ideas which were formerly unquestioned presuppositions are criticised and undermined by scepticism. In these circumstances it is necessary for us to keep alive in our breasts the consciousness of those ethical bonds which unite us to our fellow-citizens and lift us above the weakness and uncertainty of our individual lives. And it is still more necessary that we should regard the national unity not as a copartnery for selfish ends, but as binding us to each other only as it binds us to the service of the ideal set before the nation by the best things in its past history—by its struggle for political and religious freedom, by the sense of social duty which is the most precious tradition of its civil and military service, by the effort of its most philanthropic citizens to extend the benefits of civilisation to the poor and weak among its own members, as well as among those less civilised races that have been brought under its rule. It is only such an ideal of social service

that can really purify our lives, and can raise us above the continual losses and disappointments, which meet us even in youth, and which necessarily grow more and more frequent as the years go on.

The prolonged life of the state, the community, the nation, took among many ancient nations the place of a belief in individual immortality :

“As leaves are to the tree whereon they grow
And wither, every human generation
Is to the being of a mighty nation !”

The Greek thought of the city as that which gave dignity and permanence to his individual, fleeting life. The Jew for long fixed his hopes on the blessing that should for ever follow the path of the seed of Abraham, on the kingdom of David which should last as long as the hills. And though, with the widening of the sense of man's kinship beyond the limits of the nation, there came also the widening of his hope and faith beyond the chances of all life, national and individual, in this world, yet we must remember what is the natural basis of a belief in immortality. It is the fact that we can live a life which is wider and higher than our own, *here and now*. We feel this even in the case of individuals, whose unselfish, beneficent energy, whose devotion to truth or good, to

some department of social duty, has, in spite of human frailty, lifted them above themselves. It is impossible, when we think of such great spiritual forces that have lived beside us, "whom we have seen with our eyes and our hands have handled," altogether to believe in death. And still less, when we think of the long and mighty struggle of a national history such as ours—of the toil and endurance of multitudes by which this national life has been built up, of the free self-sacrifice with which so many brave and good men have poured out their lives to secure and enrich it, of the great throb of national patriotism that has so often manifested, and still manifests, itself when the hour of trial comes—can we believe that this divine energy of spirit, which has been developed at such cost and has produced such high results in thought and action, is itself a thing of mortal mould. "God is not the God of the dead but of the living," and they who partake in such a larger life, in that spirit of patriotism and humanity which from the earliest days has been gradually lifting men to higher things, just in so far as they partake in it are raised above the fear of change and death.

Passing from such thoughts, I wish to say one word to you who, as members of this College, are beginning, or have carried forward to some extent,

your preparation for the public service. Some of you are destined for what is technically called the civil service : all of you are destined for the service of the community. And you have here opportunities and advantages which—estimating them at the least—are greater than those open to more than one in a thousand of your fellow-countrymen. These rich opportunities of culture, this life of freedom from care, these three or four years of a kind of happiness such as few young men in the world enjoy, are a heritage won for you by the labours and sacrifices of many generations of men in the past : men who have accumulated material resources, who have widened knowledge and levelled the paths of education, who at great cost to themselves have gained for their descendants a larger, freer and happier existence. But these advantages should raise in your minds a generous shame that you enjoy what is as yet the portion of so few, a sense of the incalculable obligations you have incurred to your country. If the great Greek poet could say : “It is our country that saves us, that bears up our life and surrounds us with friends,” what shall we say in modern England, who have inherited from our fathers the opportunities for a far richer and deeper life ? Shall we not resolve to do all that lies in us to pay something of

our immeasurable debt, and to hand on enlarged to our successors that great heritage of truth and freedom, of honour and well-being, which is bound up with the national life of England?

ADDRESS AFTER THE QUEEN'S DEATH

Delivered in Balliol Hall, on the
27th of January, 1901.

It is fitting that I should say a few words on the great loss which our national life has sustained in the death of Queen Victoria. Even apart from any special or directly personal feeling to our late Queen, the ending of a reign which has included and, in most cases, extended far beyond our own lives, must be like the breaking of a great link between us and the past. For, throughout all this long period, the personality of the Queen has been before the nation, sharing in all its fortunes, sympathising keenly in every loss and gain that has come to the national life, and often exercising no slight influence upon it. It seems desirable, therefore, that we should to-night take a short survey of the past, and endeavour to realise what Queen Victoria has been to us, and also to recall, at least in outline, the great development of the nation and the empire, which has taken place in the era to which her name has been given.

When we speak of the Victorian era, the phrase seems to suggest a comparison with that other era to which the name of a Queen has been attached. But such a comparison must in the main be a contrast, whether we look to the nature of the changes which took place in those eras, or to the personal qualities which they demanded in the Sovereign. In the Elizabethan era the nation was passing through a great religious conflict, which at the same time involved the question of its national independence—the question whether it was to be allowed to develop freely according to the requirements of its national genius. To a late period of the reign, England was fighting for its very existence, with discord within, and apparently overpowering hostile forces without; and all patriotic Englishmen had to rally round the Crown as round a standard of battle. In these circumstances the nation was content to throw its destinies almost unreservedly into the hands of a strong, courageous, and apparently arbitrary Queen, who, however, in all her arbitrariness, was ready to listen to wise counsellors, and who had herself the wisdom to see—often reluctantly, but always in time—that her true glory lay in the policy which secured the free development of the English people. No such

figure of splendid wilfulness could have stood at the head of the nation in these later days. Queen Victoria inherited the throne at a time when the prestige of monarchy was very low, and when the nation was entering upon a course of political and social change which tended to cast more and more power into the hands of the body of the people. She had to play the difficult part of a constitutional sovereign, whose name was attached to all the acts of the government, and whose style was still that of an absolute monarch, but whose direct and immediate power over these acts was very limited. The maxim that the "King can do no wrong," seemed to be invented for a situation in which, directly and personally, he could hardly do anything at all, but must resign himself to be a *magni nominis umbra*, to be only, as some one has said, the "I will" attached to the resolutions of the government to give them a personal form. Yet this is not really the case; for, true as it is that the centre of gravity of our politics is not now in the Sovereign, it is no less true that he has still a very large scope for his activity, and that any wise constitutional king must have great opportunity for impressing his personality on the life of the nation. On this subject we can quote the authoritative words of

Mr. Gladstone, from a review written by him in 1875, on the life of the Prince Consort :

“The weighty business of kingship has in modern times been undergoing a subtle and silent, yet an almost entire transformation ; and, in this country at least, the process has reached its maturity. Neither the nature nor the extent of this process appears as yet to have become familiar to the ordinary run of observers. The name of the Queen is still the symbol, and her office the fountain, of all lawful powers. Royalty was seen and felt among us, until the darkening shadow of widowhood fell upon the august head, by people of every rank and class, with unusual frequency and in a splendour never surpassed by the habit of preceding Sovereigns. Many, then, did not advert to the fact that the character of the regal office had been altered, while those who believed in the change for the most part also believed that this great function was now emptied of its force, and reduced to an illusion. Both alike were in an error : in an error which it is not easy to correct by a summary description. The nearest approach to an account combining truth and brevity would, perhaps, be found in the statement that, while in extent the change has been, at least inwardly, nothing less than a transformation, its substance

may chiefly be perceived in a *beneficial substitution of influence for power.*" Mr. Gladstone goes on to explain this by saying that "although the admirable arrangements of the constitution have now completely shielded the Sovereign from personal responsibility, they have left ample scope for the exercise of a direct and personal influence in the whole work of government. The amount of that influence must greatly vary, according to character, to capacity, to experience in affairs, to tact in the application of a pressure which is never to be carried to extremes; to patience in keeping up the continuity of a multitudinous supervision; and, lastly, to close presence at the seat of government; for, in many of its necessary operations, time is the most essential of all elements, and the most scarce. Subject to the range of these variations, the Sovereign, as compared with her ministers, has, because she is the Sovereign, the advantages of long experience, wide survey, elevated position, and entire disconnection from the bias of party. Further, personal and domestic relations with the ruling families abroad give openings in delicate cases for saying more, and saying it at once more gently and more efficaciously, than could be ventured in the more formal correspondence and ruder contacts

of Governments." Mr. Gladstone then refers to the part taken by the Queen in the matter of the Spanish marriages, and goes on to say: "Instances so very conspicuous as this may be rare; but there is not a doubt that the aggregate of direct influence normally exercised by the Sovereign upon the counsels and proceedings of her Ministers is considerable in amount, tends to permanence and solidity of action, and confers much benefit on the country, without in the smallest degree relieving the advisers of the Crown from their undivided responsibility." But, he adds, "we doubt whether even this very important function of the Sovereign in watching, following, and canvassing policy, be not less important than the use which may be made of the vast moral and social influence attaching personally to the occupant of the throne."

It is, indeed, easy to see that the indirect power of such a position must be very great, and also that it must rise and fall—perhaps more than that of any other position—with the ability and character of its occupant. A Sovereign who was weak, or careless of duty, might easily lose hold of his Ministers and of the nation; while, if he had any real capacity, and was strenuously bent on making the best of

his position, he would possess an authority which would continually grow with time and experience. As the one great official who always remains in office, who is raised above all party and class interests, and who comes into direct personal relations with the leaders of all parties, as well as with the heads of all the great services, civil and military, it is inevitable that he should gradually acquire a kind of experience that is peculiarly valuable, and exercise a moderating and reconciling influence upon the movement of party government. In fact, he will tend by his very position to acquire a habit of mind which looks to the unity and continuity of the national life as above and apart from the ebb and flow of opinion in this or that direction—a habit of mind which will make him the best, because the one quite impartial and disinterested, adviser of his Ministers; and this the more, that his advice will be entirely private, and that it will be the Minister and not he, who will get the immediate credit of any good that may come of following it. Hence, although the Sovereign of a free nation cannot resist the great political movement in which the will of the nation is expressed, nor control its chosen representatives in the policy which they resolve to follow, he may do much to prevent transitions from being

too violent, to influence individuals to 'act harmoniously together, and to 'make the working of the political machine more steadfast and consistent.

Now it is the distinction of the Queen that she has throughout shown a clear consciousness both of the limits of her position and its strength. Early married to a man of strong character, of fine culture and accomplishments, and of resolute good sense, who with entire self-abnegation devoted his life to teaching and helping her to understand and to discharge the duties of her position, she gradually acquired an almost unerring instinct as to the things she might, and the things she might not, do. She could not be without personal leanings towards one minister or another ; but, after the earliest years of her reign, she steadfastly repressed such feelings, and made the chosen representatives of the nation, of whatever party, feel that they had her thorough support in the discharge of their high functions. The time has not come for her whole action to be revealed, but we know that, once and again, she has used her influence to make statesmen work together for the good of the country, and that, especially in foreign politics, she has made unceasing efforts, sometimes attended with no little success, to secure the peace of Europe and

of the world. Thus, when she induced Lord John Russell to soften the language of his dispatch to the United States Government after the Trent affair, she did much to prevent a dangerous collision at the time, and to maintain permanent good relations with the United States. We know also of several other cases in which her influence upon Home and Foreign politics was very useful : and probably, as I have said, when the full record of the nineteenth century is published, we may hear of many such services which are as yet hidden from us. For, of course, the very condition of such influence is that it should be unseen and unknown at the time. Within the last few days we have had very remarkable testimonies from statesmen of both parties to the value of her advice and criticism of the proposals of different governments. I need only quote as a specimen the significant words of Lord Salisbury : "She always maintained and practised a rigorous supervision over public affairs, giving to her ministers her frank advice, warning them of danger, if she saw there was danger ahead. She certainly impressed many of us with a profound sense of the penetration, almost the intuition, with which she saw the perils we might be threatened with in any course it was thought expedient to adopt. She left upon my

mind, she left upon our minds, the conviction that it was always a dangerous matter to press on in any course of the expediency of which she was not thoroughly convinced : and, without venturing upon details, I may say with confidence that no minister in her long reign ever disregarded her advice without afterwards feeling that he had incurred a dangerous responsibility." One who could be thus spoken of with evident sincerity by statesmen of all parties might almost be said to have reached the ideal of a constitutional Sovereign.

Another part of her work is more obvious to the general public. As the recognised fountain of honour, she was the organ through whom the nation conveyed rewards and distinctions to those who had deserved well of the state ; and she always knew how to give the final touch of grace and personal feeling, which makes such honours doubly valuable to those who receive them. Further—and this is perhaps the characteristic that has made most impression upon the community in general—she has been quick to feel, and to express her feeling of sympathy for any great joy, and still more for any great sorrow, that came to the nation as a whole, or to any class, and even, so far as possible, to any individual of her subjects. This

gift of sympathy, when it is genuine, carries with it the gift of understanding those with whom we sympathise; and we are not surprised to hear from several of her ministers that "she always knew what her subjects generally would think upon any subject." It was probably these qualities that on one occasion drew a striking tribute to her character from the lips of a great popular leader. At a Reform meeting in 1866—when some speaker censured the Queen for not recognising the people when they gathered in great numbers in front of one of her palaces, and generally for her withdrawal from many occasions of appearing in public after the death of the Prince Consort—John Bright rose, and after pointing out that the Queen could not, according to constitutional usage, give any indication of favour to a measure that was in course of discussion between the different parties, he went on to say: "The honourable gentleman has referred to a supposed absorption of the Queen in grief for her husband to the exclusion of sympathy for, and with, the people. I am not accustomed to stand up in defence of those who are the possessors of thrones. But I could not sit here and hear that observation without a sensation of wonder and pain. I think that there has been by many persons a great injustice

done to the Queen in reference to her desolate and widowed position. And I venture to say that a woman, be she the Queen of a great realm, or the wife of one of your labouring men, who can keep alive in her heart a great sorrow for the lost object of her life and her affections, is not likely to be wanting in a great and generous sympathy for you."

The greatest of all the services of the Queen to the nation, however, was perhaps that which she did by living in her high station a pure and gentle life, a life whose pleasures were honest and innocent, and whose best energies were devoted to public duty. The manner of her daily existence, her relations to her husband and her family, all her tastes and private occupations, have been as fully revealed to the world as such things can be revealed about anyone; and the one thing that strikes us is the extreme simplicity of the life that was lived in the midst of so much state. "She elected," said Lord Beaconsfield on one occasion, "she elected, amid the splendours of empire, to base her throne upon the principle of domestic love." No humblest citizen's life ever found its pleasure and its support more directly in the common affections and interests of the household. We have before us, mainly in her own words, the

record of the Queen's feelings and experiences in all the great events of her private life; and the wisdom in these natural and unaffected utterances is the wisdom of sincerity, of good sense and good feeling. She had in great measure that higher kind of utilitarianism which is said to be characteristic of the best type of English mind, the tendency to estimate things by their practical results, not, indeed, in the vulgar sense of the attainment of gain or glory, but practical results in the development of character and the promotion of social well-being. Her religion, like that of her husband, was a Christianity of the most directly practical kind, without much of a dogmatic or speculative element, and with almost no regard for outward ceremony—a Christianity which was the consecration of duty by a divine sanction. In the beautiful words which have been quoted from Charles Lamb "she gave her heart to the Purifier, and her will to the Will that governs the universe." Living a blameless life as maiden, wife, mother and widow, she shared in all the great personal joys and sorrows of humanity. And in her old age, when by the loss of many friends, of children and grandchildren, the crown of many sorrows was added to her other claims to reverence, the Queen's sympathy with all

classes of her subjects seemed to grow deeper and more intimate, till her relations to them, and especially to her civil servants, her soldiers and her sailors, became a kind of extension of her relations to her own family. Everyone must have noticed the throb of personal interest and anxiety that appeared in her utterances during the present war, the cares and losses of which, perhaps, were the final trial which her age-worn strength could not resist. She might, perhaps, with less of metaphor than in most cases of the application of such a title, be called the mother of her people. With all her simplicity of thought and feeling, however, she was every inch a Queen, with the dignity and courage which are the royal attributes of character; and throughout her life she showed that she realised what it is to be the Sovereign of a free people, the representative of those common aims and aspirations which in spite of all our differences bind us together as the members of a great nation.

It has been well said that the Queen's reign bridges over the gulf that separates the Old England from the New. Almost all the great interests which make up the life of the nation, almost all the tendencies that divide us and unite us, both in our natural and in our spiritual life,

have taken a new form since her accession ; and it is like returning to another era of history, when we send our minds back to the period before she came to the throne, and try to realise the ideas and feelings of that earlier day. The great triumph of the Allied Nations over Napoleon at the beginning of the century was followed by a period of reaction, in which their Governments tried to suppress the forces which the struggle had called out ; and this, again, was followed by a period of popular discontent and agitation. These movements took a much less violent form in this than in most other countries, and they had already, before the beginning of the Queen's reign, constrained the Ministers of the Crown to enter upon the path of constitutional reform. But the first steps made in this direction tended rather to increase than to diminish the general sense of the evils from which the nation was suffering. In other countries, authority was discredited and the revolutionary forces were gradually developing which, in 1848, led to the temporary overturn of almost all the thrones of Europe. And even in this country, during the early years of Queen Victoria, there were frequent riots and disturbances in many of the cities of the kingdom in connection with the Chartist movement. The same political discontent and

unrest also showed itself in the intellectual life of Europe. The great outburst of new life in literature and philosophy which in Germany accompanied the revolutionary wars of the beginning of the century, and which in this country showed itself in a rich and original stream of poetry, in the works of Byron and Shelley, of Coleridge and Wordsworth, had apparently spent its force. The cosmopolitan ideas of the Revolution, and the fresh consciousness of the unity of national life which was developed in the struggle with Napoleon, had been almost lost and forgotten in the common disappointment with the results of victory. Idealism, both practical and speculative, was discredited, and that which took its place, and most influenced the minds of statesmen, was the principle of *Laissez faire*, and unrestricted competition,—a principle which was destined to do much good in the removal of bad forms of taxation, and the liberation of trade from hurtful and unjust restrictions, but which, after all, was negative rather than positive, a disintegrating rather than a uniting force. For, as Carlyle soon after began loudly to assert, the ultimate nexus of mankind can never be cash-payment; and, though the regime of free competition had enormous effects in promoting the increase of wealth, it also led to a widening of

the division between employer and employed, and produced many frightful results in the sufferings of those who were defeated or exploited in the keen struggle for existence and for wealth—results which were tardily counteracted by legislation at a much later period. In general, therefore, it may be said that the time at which the Queen came to the throne was one in which the nation was beginning to encounter many serious problems, which were imperfectly understood even by its most experienced and enlightened political leaders, and in which the old ideals of life were fast losing their power without any new ones having clearly taken their place.

When we look upon this picture, and that which we have now before us, it is natural to ask how far things have changed; how far we can regard the nation as in a more hopeful state, outwardly and inwardly; and especially, whether it is better fitted to meet the new problems and new dangers which the new century brings with it.

Now, he would be a foolish person who could look back upon the past sixty-four years of our national history with unmingled feelings of satisfaction. It is a record of many wars, small and great, some of which are now recognised by

most as not strictly just or necessary, and which, though as a rule victorious, caused much suffering and waste of material sources ; of famine and plague which devastated portions of the empire ; of commercial disasters, the results of ill-regulated speculation, which brought deep distress to many homes, and especially to the homes of the labouring classes ; of social unrest and divisions so embittered as, at times, to threaten the unity of our national life. On the other hand, it has been an era of rapid growth and expansion, in which the wealth of the nation has enormously increased ; and the bounds of the empire have been extended, with unprecedented rapidity, in India, in Egypt, in Southern and Western Africa, and in Australasia. With this expansion, has gone a great change in our political institutions, which, at the beginning of the Queen's reign, were almost entirely in the hands of the upper and middle classes, and which now, by gradual extension of the suffrage, have become in a great measure democratic.

In spite, or we should rather say because, of this widening of the basis of representation, this country has passed through an era, in which revolutionary disturbances have repeatedly taken place in most of the leading nations of Europe, without any violent shock or interruption of its

political life. Another result of the change has been a continually increasing effort of Parliament to deal with social questions, beginning in the measures proposed by Lord Ashley for the protection of women and children engaged in the mining industry, and continued to our own day in a large body of legislation, intended to avert the special dangers of various trades, or otherwise to promote the well-being of the working classes. Lastly, in the latter part of the reign, have come the comprehensive measures for the education of the people, and those which have produced or facilitated the remarkable revival and new development of municipal government. Along with this great political progress, have come many moral and religious changes, and especially a great deepening of the practical sense that we are our brother's keepers, showing itself in the devotion of many of our best and most energetic minds, not merely to philanthropic work for the relief of suffering, but to a patient study of the origin and nature of the ills to which the body politic is subject—a study the object of which is to enable us to deal with their causes rather than merely with their effects or symptoms.

There has also arisen among many of the younger men of the classes that enjoy greater

social advantages, a growing desire—which one would wish to be more widely spread than it is—to communicate the blessings they have received to those who are less favoured, and a generous feeling of shame that so many of their countrymen should still be shut out, as they are, from so many of the benefits of the great heritage of man. In this College I need not do more than mention the names of Green and Toynbee, as among those who have led the way in this direction. I think also that—in spite of certain exceptions—the sense that all classes in the nation are bound together by common memories of the past, common interests of the present, and common hopes of the future, has become wider and deeper: and—despite some unfortunate facts—that a more liberal Colonial policy and a better organisation of the civil service have, in some measure, extended the same feeling of unity to the various daughter communities and dependencies which have grown up around the mother country, in various parts of the globe.

In the things of the intellectual life, again, the Victorian era has not been less fruitful than previous periods of our national history. We can point to at least two great poets, to several writers of works of fiction who

have attained to all but the highest rank in their difficult art, to a remarkable school of painters, and to many distinguished literary men and historians. And to the great scientific work of the age, a movement of enquiry into all departments of nature such as the world never saw before, this country has contributed its full share, having produced the greatest biologist of this, or perhaps of any time, and many scientific men who are inferior only to him in the originality of their researches. This country has taken no little part in that application of the results of science to man's uses, which has made greater progress in this century than in all previous ages of human history; and in which, to mention only one thing, the employment of steam and electricity has done so much to bring the whole civilised world together, as one great community. Lastly, as connected with, and reaching beyond, all this advance of literature and science, we have to recall the way in which the thoughts of men as to their own past and future, and also as to their relation to nature, have been widened and transformed during the nineteenth century, especially by the sway of the idea of *Evolution*, which may be said to have been, if not discovered, yet for the first time fruitfully applied,

during this century. For this idea has remoulded our whole conception of the history of human life and thought, as well as of the genesis of the organic kingdom, and it has enabled us to find order and unity in many phenomena that formerly seemed to be almost unmeaning. This element of thought is, of course, not peculiarly national, but Darwin and many other minds inspired by it, have been found among the citizens of this country.

When we look back upon this wonderful record of expansion, both in material and spiritual things, we see that we are now in a world which, if not better, is at least immensely wider and more comprehensive than that in which our countrymen lived at the time when Queen Victoria came to the throne. Our outlook upon life has become freer and fuller, our interests more complex and varied. Partly as the result of material, but partly also owing to spiritual causes, we know a great deal more about each other, and about other nations; and, in consequence, we have far livelier feelings of liking and disliking, a far stronger sense both of antagonism and of agreement, with our fellow-citizens and with the citizens of other states, than our predecessors could possibly have felt. Hence, also, the problems which we have to

face have become more difficult and far-reaching, and our national responsibilities have become much greater than they were at the beginning of the reign. The difficulty, for instance, of combining the inner life of a free state with the control of a vast empire, a difficulty which was fatal to all the nations which attempted to solve it in earlier times, has enormously increased. And the very growth of our dominion has brought with it the risk of political intoxication which, if not averted, might bring about the ruin of the commonwealth. Further, from many critics we have begun to hear that the nation is no longer equal to its responsibilities, that it has been living too much upon its past, and not sufficiently training itself for the new tasks which, in an age of science, are thrown upon all classes of the community, upon our soldiers and sailors, upon our statesmen and civil servants, upon our employers of labour and upon our working men. And, again, we hear voices telling us that we have become ethically relaxed, and that the old faiths which restrained and sustained the moral energies of our fathers, have lost their power over our hearts.

I think it must be admitted that there is some truth in these Cassandra voices, and that

it is time for all members of the nation to realise that, if it is to maintain the high place it formerly held, it can only be by an even deeper faith in God and goodness, and a self-devotion to the well-being of the community equally strenuous and more intelligent than that which it showed in the best days of its past history. To you who, many of you, will eventually come to occupy important posts in the public service and in the great professions, and who have such large opportunities, during the peaceful years of your College life, to prepare for your future work, this appeal comes with peculiar force. To you much has been given, and of you much will be required.

I do not believe in those prophets of evil, who tell us that this nation has ceased to grow and begun to decay. One, who has been a teacher of youth in this and another University for nearly forty years, would be blind, indeed, if he could suppose that the seed of intellect and character was beginning to fail in this country. But I think it is proved that we have been resting too much on our achievements, and that we need to learn the force of the old lesson that "what we have inherited from our fathers, we must gain again for ourselves, if we would really possess it." One hopeful thing we have learnt,

if we needed to learn it, from this unhappy war, which has taught us so many of our short-comings; and that is, that the sons of the nation are as ready to die for their native land as ever their fathers were before them. But it is, and will be, in most cases, a far harder thing for them to learn to live for it, and to encounter all the great tasks which the new time is throwing upon them. Patriotism may be, and often is, a shallow and vulgar thing, a sort of enlarged selfishness and vain glory; but patriotism of the kind which expressed itself in Nelson's great battle-signal, and which inspired our late Queen through her long life of service to the nation, has been the basis of all the greatness of this country in the past, and can alone enable it to fulfil the high destiny which is open to it in the future. Let us make it our endeavour, so far as in us lies, that the great treasure of national freedom and national honour which is committed to our hands, may be handed down by us intact, or rather augmented, to our successors. And let us pray to Almighty God that the new King, whose name carries us back to the earliest beginnings of our free constitution, may see the nation rising beneath his rule to still higher life than that which it has lived in the past,

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and that, through all the many vicissitudes and developments of the coming time, his throne may rest secure

“Broad-based upon his people’s will,
And compassed by the inviolate sea.”

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

“So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground ; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself ; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

MARK IV. 26,

THERE is no idea which is so potent in our day as the idea of evolution, development, or organic growth. It is an idea with which you have had, or will have, to occupy yourselves much during the course of your studies here, at least all of you who have to deal with subjects connected with the life of man or even with the life of animals—either with biology, or with history, or with philosophy. The favourite modern method of finding out what any thing, or, at least, what any living thing is, is to ask how it came to be; to read its present state in the light of its past, and to trace out the gradual steps of change that link the form it has attained with the earliest manifestations of its life. Whether it be a plant or an animal, a man or a society of men, or even the human race as a whole, we never think we know it thoroughly till we have seen its whole history as a gradual process, whereby without haste and without rest, it has changed from less to more,

yet preserving through all the revolutions of its being the characteristic quality or tendency which distinguishes it from all other creatures in the universe. Our great interest in biography is due to the desire to see that the "child is father to the man"; in other words, to see how, from boyhood to manhood, and from manhood to old age, through all change of circumstances and all widening of intellectual and practical interests, we can detect the same unique, individual nature, and link each new expression of it in speech and action with that which preceded it. And, in like manner, we have acquired a new interest in history, since we have begun to look upon it, not merely as a chronicle of stirring events and wonderful but incomprehensible revolutions of fortune—a play of chance and arbitrary will—but as the development of one national character through many vicissitudes, which test and try it in many ways, but never snap the thread of connection between its present and its past, or prevent us from recognising that they are phases of the same life.

Now, such a view of things carries us quite beyond the superficial aspect that at first they present to us. It carries us at once, we might say, beyond the superficial views both of earlier and of later years, beyond the view natural to

the buoyant hopefulness of youth, and beyond the scepticism or even despair that is apt to settle upon many as age comes on. In our earliest consciousness of the world, it is not natural for us to detect any such close relation between the present and the past. Rather, at first, we are struck with the variety and novelty which every new period brings with it—the unexpected currents of events that alter the stream of our life, the great differences of dress and manners and ways of acting and thinking which separate us even from times that are not very remote. Even in our own day, those of us who are older can remember so many changes that it might seem, from this point of view, scarcely a paradox, to say that the world, like the human body, is entirely altered every seven years. And in our own lives, especially in youth, and so long as our eyes are directed only to the first immediate aspect of things, we seem to see endless vicissitude, new ideas and new desires arising in us with every change in our outward circumstances. We might say that to the young, the world is always a new world, born afresh every new day. Experience carries us beyond this necessarily hopeful view, but it does not make us wiser, though it often brings about a revulsion of feeling to the opposite extreme.

As life goes on, and the first superficial glow of freshness passes away from the face of the world, and our own course of existence becomes more fixed and definite, we are too apt to become as one-sided in hopelessness as we were in hope; to be impressed more and more with the similarity of human life in all times and circumstances, the constant repetition of the same joys and sorrows, loves and hates, the *regular revolution of the wheel with which*,—just as the year brings round over and over again the same seasons,—the lives of men and generations of men return through the same cycle of hope and disappointment, satisfaction and regret, to the same inevitable end. Thus as the years roll on and the first freshness of things departs, we find men falling into the old refrain of Ecclesiastes: "One generation passeth away and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun." Effort, it would seem, is futile, since it brings nothing essentially new and leaves no permanent trace. "There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come

after." "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"

It is this same refrain, with a slight difference, that we find re-echoed in all the elegiac poets of antiquity and of the modern time. They are continually dwelling upon the futility and emptiness of our existence and the deceptive sweetness of its transitory pleasures, which awaken our desires for a moment with a promise which they cannot fulfil, only to make the disappointment and disillusionment the heavier for us in the end. Life is to them a continual round, a path that ever returns upon itself and leads to nothing, lit up for a little by the hopes of youth as we ascend the hill, only to be quenched again as we descend it. No one has perhaps expressed this tone of mind with more pathetic simplicity than William Morris in some passages of his *Earthly Paradise*, where he tells us that life and death are for him equally an enigma, for which he has no solution but the old one, that "All is Vanity":

"Death have we hated, knowing not what it means:
 Life have we loved through green leaf and through sere,
 Though still the less we knew of its intent,
 Though earth and heaven, through countless year on
 year
 Slow-changing, were to us but curtains fair,

Hung round about a little room where play
Weeping and laughter of man's empty day."

Now, any higher faith as to the meaning of life emancipates us from both these views, from the external and superficial view of life as a changing show of ever new forms and interests, as well as from the scarcely less superficial view of it as the endless revolution of a wheel of fortune which alternately lifts men up and casts them down, but never carries them a step forward towards any true consummation or good. A religious faith, come in what form it may, raises its possessor above the empty and unreasoning hopes which are so natural to men at the beginning of life, and above the almost equally empty hopelessness into which they tend to fall as the years go on. Nay, we might say that *any* real faith in God or in man, any consciousness of the true greatness or the moral life within us or of that of the society of which we form a part, any faith that there is a meaning in the life of man upon earth, will carry us beyond the mere external joy that life is so pleasant and interesting a thing as it is before any severe disappointment has clouded it, and equally beyond the hopeless belief to which, after such disappointment, so many men yield, that it has nothing permanently valuable to give us. Such a faith will lift us

above the hopes and fears of a selfish life and enable us to realise that beneath the "weeping and laughter of man's empty day" a real purpose and end is realising itself in human life, and that we in our day and generation may contribute to the great work—may make ourselves the instruments and organs of that higher spirit which through the ages is slowly carrying man on to a goal which he can anticipate, but which he cannot measure. The greatest men of the world are those with whom such a transcendent faith that looks beyond change and death is an abiding presence, and who therefore are able to kindle it in others ; who thus, as it were, free other men from the bonds of mortality, take away the commonness of life, and make them aware of the high issues with which it is fraught ; and who therefore awaken them to efforts of which at other times they would have deemed themselves incapable :

"Follow me, Jesus said, and they uprose,
 Peter and Andrew rose and followed Him,
 Followed Him, even to Heaven, through death most
 grim
 And through a long hard life without repose,
 Save in the grand ideal of its close.
 Take up your cross and follow Me, He said,
 And the world answers still through all its dead,
 And still would answer had we faith like those."

The beginning of religious life is always such an awakening to the greatness that underlies the littleness of our ordinary existence. It is the discovery that, beneath the trifling and routine which take up so much of our time, beneath the little interests and pleasures of every day, beneath the mere struggle for existence and for success, and the disappointment that the success is not sufficient or does not satisfy us when we get it, beneath all the passing appearances of our life, there is a deeper and more important movement going on, a conflict being fought out between good and evil in which we are all every day of our lives taking sides, a great divine purpose being realised to which, whether we will or not, we are always contributing.

Now, Christianity was just the greatest of all such awakenings of mankind to the true meaning of life. And so thorough and startling was the awakening to those who first received it, that it often seemed to them as if it was not the same old existence which had been revealed to them in a new aspect, but rather that they were carried into a new world where they had to begin to live afresh. The new religion seemed to uproot them from all the use and wont, the tradition and custom of life, and to plant them on a new soil and environment, where nothing

of their former experiences could avail them. The change was so great and sudden that it seemed to involve a complete break with their former selves, and they could only describe it as a "putting off of the old man" and "a putting on of the new." In St. Paul's Epistles we have frequent and vivid expressions of this point of view. "We have passed from death to life:" "Old things have passed away and all things have become new." And there was more than this: for, to those who had been conscious of such a revolution in their inner life all human existence was apt to become miraculous and arbitrary, a strange eventful history full of shocks and surprises, subject to continual interferences from above and below, and without any law or order of growth determined by its own nature.

It is the more remarkable that Jesus Christ, who is in one sense the greatest revolutionist the world ever saw, should so constantly present spiritual life to us, not as the inroad upon our being of something entirely new, but simply as an awakening to something that was always there; not as a sudden revolutionary change by which the link between the past and present was snapped, but simply as the further development and manifestation of a principle which was working in human life and history from

its first beginning. Thus, while St. Paul, though not without the thought of a progress from the old dispensation to the new, dwells by preference on the *difference* of the Law and the Gospel, Christ dwells by preference on their unity and connexion. He declares that He Himself came not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil them; and He presents His commands, not as a substitute for what was said by them of old time, but simply as deepening, widening, reinterpreting the old letter till the spirit that was half concealed in it becomes wholly revealed. He does not contrast the inward law that deals with the thoughts and intents of the heart with the outward law that had formerly regulated men's actions, but rather bids us realise that the former gives a new meaning and a wider range to the latter. Thus He links together the old and the new, and teaches—and perhaps we might say He was the first to teach—that the whole history of mankind is bound together in one, as a progressive manifestation of God *to* and *in* man. Hence the Christian father who talked of Christianity as being “as old as the world,” and of the human soul “as naturally Christian,” *anima naturaliter Christiana*, was simply following out the teaching of his Master.

And this view of the development of Christianity out of the past is naturally accompanied by a similar view of its future. Several of the parables of the kingdom of God are parables of evolution, in which processes of the spiritual life are compared to the organic processes of nature: the parable of the sower illustrates the different ways in which the same principle is developed in different individuals, as it calls forth that living reaction by which character is formed; the parable of the mustard seed illustrates how from the smallest of beginnings the germ of truth sown in a few hearts, gradually grows and spreads till it takes hold of all men and nations and changes all society; and finally, we have here a parable which, perhaps more fully than any of the others, brings before us the idea of a spiritual evolution in all its various aspects. By the illustration of the growth of the wheat to the harvest, it calls attention, on one hand, to the quietness, continuity and naturalness of the process whereby spiritual life is developed, which makes it almost entirely escape notice while it is going on; and, on the other hand, to the wonderful transforming power of that process, which we discover when, after a time, we compare the later with the earlier stages of it. If we keep watching the plant, we see nothing; from

moment to moment we cannot observe a single trace of change ; but it is growing all the while, step by step, without haste, and without rest, without catastrophe and without stop ; and if we go away for a while and then return, so great is the alteration that, but for our knowledge of other similar transitions, we could not recognise it as the same plant. Men sow the seed ; they wake and sleep and go on with the usual routine of existence, not taking any thought of what is happening ; but meantime the processes of nature are fulfilling their destined course ; and when they come back, they find that the blade, they know not how, has prepared the way for the ear, and the ear has ripened into the full corn, and the harvest is waving in the fields for the reaper to put in his sickle. So is it with the development of spiritual life. A man, or a society of men, sows the seeds of good and evil, conscious of the particular acts they do, but taking no thought of the enormous agencies they are setting in motion. Their minds at the time are occupied with special pleasures or with the gains they think they are making, but they do not attach any great importance to their acts ; and, afterwards, they take no thought of what they have done, or perhaps forget all about it. But the spiritual world, like the natural,

has its laws of growth, and slowly but certainly within the man or the nation, the seed ripens to the fruit. Inevitably the good or evil act lays the train for the good or evil tendency, and the good or evil tendency spreads out its influence till it permeates the whole life, moulding all the habits, all the manifold ways of thinking or acting, till the development and organisation of character in the individual or the nation surprises us with the full-grown harvest of justice or injustice, salvation or moral ruin.

Now it is to this imperceptible, we might almost say treacherous, nature of the process of growth, and, on the other hand, to the enormous results achieved by it, that I would direct your attention for a few minutes longer. There is a strange mixture of the conscious and the unconscious in our mental history. Our life is not unconscious like the plant's; we see clearly what we are doing from day to day. We are aware always of the immediate interest that is occupying us, the immediate object we have in view. But we are seldom aware of the general current and tendency which these particular acts are contributing to form within us. Each act, taken by itself, does not seem of much importance. We seem continually to be dealing with small details, and rarely, if

at all, with great and momentous issues. The times when any important decision is made—any decision at least which appears important at the time—are few and far between; and the rest of life seems to be a mixture of routine and accident. And we are apt to despise the day of small things, to attach no weight to the trivial round of actions which make up nine-tenths, or rather ninety-nine hundredths, of our lives. The little exigencies of every day—whether we shall go to see a particular friend, or read a particular book, or devote particular time to this object or to that—it seems often almost indifferent whether we decide them in one way or the other; and often it is indifferent. But we are apt to forget that life masks its great issues under the appearance of a series of unimportant circumstances and events, in each of which, however, there is some opportunity for the exercise of courage or cowardice, truthfulness or untruthfulness, magnanimity or meanness, justice or injustice, charity or uncharitableness, love or hate. Steadily, silently, the inevitable process of change goes on, and neither the individual himself nor any of those nearest to him may notice how, in the one case, his character is being strengthened and elevated, and, in the other case, is being weakened and

lowered. And then, if a great issue does come, and he is put to a decisive trial, neither his friends nor he are able to comprehend how it is that, in the one case, he rises to the occasion and shows a strength and resource for which beforehand no one would have given him credit; or, in the other case, betrays a weakness and poverty of character, which no one, and he himself least of all, had suspected. The truth is that the battle is often won or lost long before it is fought. The man in the one case has become unstrung, relaxed and enfeebled by many trifling acts of self-indulgence, of shirking from pain or effort, by many neglects of duty in little matters; and when the demand comes upon him to pull himself together, and face a difficult crisis, he weakly collapses before the trial. Or, on the other hand, strength has been accumulating within him by imperceptible increments, by a self-denial here, a little act of courage or fairness or kindness there, in the long course of the unnoticed days, till, when the hour of a great decision arrives, he finds within him a large reserve of moral energy, like Wordsworth's Happy Warrior, who

"If he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven hath joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,

Is happy as a lover ; and attired
 With sudden brightness, like a man inspired ;
 And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
 In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw."

We have in recent years seen instances in which a great general has entered the field of battle only to deliver one annihilating blow at the foes of his country ; but such a lightning stroke was not possible except after a long course of patient preparation and laborious campaigning, which brought his forces, armed with all the weapons of civilisation, up to the chosen point of action. So it is in our moral warfare. We can never gain a decisive victory by a sudden effort at the time when great demands are made upon us, unless through the long, uninteresting days, when nothing seemed to call upon us for much exertion and no one was noticing our endeavours, we have been storing up practical wisdom in our mind and moral force in our wills.

Now it is just because of this, because of the littleness in which the greatness of human life is hidden, because of the apparent insignificance of the detail of our existence from day to day, that we do not realise the moral importance of our actions. Life, we might say, is a tragedy disguised as a comedy : it is a comedy

when our eye is merely on the moment with its passing interests and humours; it is a tragedy when we consider it as a whole, and discern the great moral issues ripening for decision in the process of the years. Now it is this deeper aspect to which the parable calls our attention. And it is by looking at it that we can raise ourselves above the two views of life, as mere lawless change or mere monotonous repetition of the same theme, of which I have spoken. If we regard the steady growth of character in individuals, still more if we consider the long development through which humanity has passed, the way in which the thought of men have "widened with the process of the suns," the slow but still manifest way in which they are gradually moving towards greater unity and greater freedom in the course of the ages, we are freed from the temptation to regard life as a vain show, a fruitless climbing up the climbing wave. The production of a great character, the development of a great national life, the gradual penetration of humanity by the image and ideal of Christ—in spite of all the ebb and flow of circumstance, and the slowness and inconstancy of human hearts—these are things we can discern, if we look with an open eye upon the history of the

individual or the race. And, imperfect as such progress may be in comparison with the ideal to which it points, it is enough to support a faith in the divine destiny of man, to deliver us from the feeling of the futility of life, and to make us sure that it is not for naught we are striving, when we seek to wash our hands in innocency and to serve some good cause with which the welfare of our nation or our race is identified. For, though in the immediate present we may often seem to be making no way against evil, a wider and more comprehensive view enables us to recognise that there are silent and irresistible forces which are working out the triumph of good as surely as the seed, through all the changes of the year, is steadily ripening to the harvest.

“Say not the struggle naught availeth,
 The labour and the wounds are vain,
 The enemy fainteth not, nor faileth,
 And as things have been, they remain.

For, while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
 Seem here no further inch to gain,
 Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
 Comes silent, flooding in, the main.”

Another thought which is suggested by this parable of growth is that while the scale of life is ever widening—first, the blade, then, the ear,

then, the full corn in the ear—the power we have of determining its course is ever lessening as we advance in years; or, to put it otherwise, the effort that has to be made in order to change the direction of our movement is ever increasing. The earlier stages of human life are, in one way, narrow and limited in scope. The interests the boy has to deal with are less important, and the responsibilities he has to bear less weighty than those of the youth, as those of the youth are less important and weighty than those of the man. But, on the other hand, the boy's nature can be more easily changed and remoulded by the influence of others and by himself than that of the youth, and that of the youth than that of the man. As we go on in life, the direction of our activity, the bias of our sympathies, becomes more fixed and definite. The grooves of habit become deeper and deeper; and what at an early period might have been achieved by a comparatively easy effort of self-control, is possible at a later time only through a mental struggle, sometimes through an agony of self-denial and self-renunciation, which almost rends life asunder.

I will not deny that, up to the last moment, a human soul may repent and break away from its past; or that while there is life,

there is hope, even for the worst. No man can altogether extinguish the craving for good that is bound up with his spiritual nature; and the revolutions that have taken place in the character of those who seemed the most degraded of men, are such that no child of Adam and of God need be despaired of. But one thing is certain that the price the individual has to pay for such change steadily grows with the years, like the price of the Sybilline books; and that even when it is paid, the result cannot be quite the same: the number of the books has diminished. Men rise on stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things, but if the old self has been allowed to grow mature and strong, they will not cease to be haunted with the ghosts of their former existence. Their lives will be disturbed by conflict with their old habits and saddened by the consciousness of a still divided will. They cannot have that security and peace, that joy and harmony with themselves, which is given to those whose life has been—on the whole, and in spite of the error and failure that comes even to the best—a steady progress from less to more, from an honest and wholesome boyhood to a generous and aspiring youth, and from that to a strong and resolute manhood and a serene and beautiful old age. Of such only is it true

that their "path is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

"Oh that our lives that fleet so fast

In purity were such,

That not an image of the past

Might fear the pencil's touch.

Retirement then might hourly look

Upon a soothing scene,

Age steal to his allotted nook,

Contented and serene:

With heart as calm as lakes that sleep

In frosty moonlight glistening,

Or mountain rivers when they creep

Along a channel smooth and deep,

To their own far-off murmurs listening."

To few men is there given in old age such a tranquil, untroubled memory of the past. To most of us who have many years behind them, dark shadows rest on some places in the backward view. And if, on the whole, we have kept our faith in truth and goodness, yet we have the scars of conflict upon us and the memory of many a partial defeat in the battle with evil. Few of us can look back upon a life of steady growth of intelligence and character which has not been interrupted by periods when no progress was made, or even in which for a time we went backwards and had to seek again the path we had lost, with much pain and self-disgust. And

what perhaps is the commonest of all experiences is that to which I have already referred, namely, that by shrinking from a little trial, a little self-control, a little effort in earlier days, we bring upon ourselves, later on, an amount of suffering and labour, which embitters and darkens many of our days, or, at the best, even if we conquer in the long run, yet leaves the result of our lives far less complete and valuable than it might have been.

Hence I say that there is no greater error that can be made in life than to despise the day of small things. This is a temptation which some young men have and some have not. There are some who are even apt to exaggerate the direct importance of the work in which they are engaged in the School and the University, to forget that it is on the whole only preparatory work, and that the most brilliant success in it is not a final test of character or ability. But more common and more dangerous is the temptation to forget that preparation for life is itself life, and to think that men may allow themselves simply to enjoy the excitements and pleasures of University life, as if it did not matter how they conducted themselves now, if they were ready and resolved to be serious when they passed from the mimic game of education to the real struggle for existence.

Well ! I do not want to exaggerate the importance of your labours here ; still less of the honours or distinctions they may bring. Nor do I for a moment say that a young man should not feel that joy of his youth, which comes from the growing interests of existence and from the comparative absence of the graver cares of life. Let me even admit—though perhaps that is too much—that the immediate results of our efforts here do not greatly matter, if we regard them *in themselves*. Yet all this must not hinder us from recognising their enormous importance in view of the future, in view of the powers, tendencies, habits of thinking and acting, which you are acquiring. In all your lives there will probably be no other time of quiet preparation. With the spiritual weapons with which the young man goes forth from the University, with these and these only for the most part, he must win his battle, if he wins it at all. And if he leaves this place with an empty mind and a character unformed, he will feel in many a future hour when he is face to face with the responsibilities of life, that he has made things very hard for himself ; as hard as it might be for a soldier who had to carry on his military training in front of the enemy. And if he has not merely neglected his opportunities but spent his time in forming habits

of idleness or self-indulgence, it will be still harder. He may indeed often find himself almost paralysed before difficulties by the unexpected reawakening of perverse impulses he had fostered, or by the sudden failure of resolution before old temptations.

And, on the other hand, if he has spent the short years here in developing his capacities for the work of life, in disciplining his mind and character in the comparative freedom of academic life and in all ways becoming master of himself and his powers, of a certainty he will find that he enters on the battle of life from a vantage ground, the value of which is inestimable. He cannot, indeed, by anything he does here, escape from the greater trials of life. But he will not have to learn the lesson of youth in the midst of the work of manhood, nor to combat again the temptations of youth while he is facing its graver difficulties. He will have, in the thought of his life here, an untainted treasure of happy memories. He will carry with him, as he advances in years, that kind of peace and harmony with self, which is always the reward of steady growth, and never of intermittent and violent efforts. The wider scale of his responsibilities will not surprise him with tasks for which he is altogether unprepared. On the contrary, as the

parable seems to suggest, the cumulative effects of his past efforts will, as it were, sum themselves up in new powers of wider range and scope, of the growth of which he has hardly himself been conscious ; first, the blade ; then, the ear ; then the full corn in the ear. Above all, it will be easier for him than for most men to have and to retain that faith in God and in goodness, which is the essence of religion and the source of the strength which it gives to human hearts—that faith of which the prophet Isaiah speaks when he declares that, when youth “faints and is weary” and its natural vigour fails, “they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary ; and they shall walk and not faint.” A pure heart and steadfast will—these and these alone hold in them the secret of perpetual youth.

THE GREAT DECISION

“AND Elijah came unto all the people and said :
How long halt ye between two opinions? If the
Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow
him.”

I KINGS XVIII 21

THE Old Testament is full of sharp, decisive phrases like this: the utterance of a spirit for which there is a very broad line of division drawn between good and evil, truth and falsehood, and which is almost more tolerant of the open enemy than of those who will not take their share in the conflict. So, in the song of Deborah we read: "Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." To the strong and unhesitating spirit that sees the right on the one side as if it were written in letters of fire, and absolute wrong on the other, nothing is so incomprehensible as the lukewarm temper, that will not be kindled either to love or hatred, and seeks rather to avoid any decisive choice. So it was with the great poet Dante, who, in his *Divine Comedy*, describes for us a special region, outside of the Inferno of agony, a kind of Inferno of contempt, which is prepared for those who have lived "without blame, and without praise."

There Dante places the angels who were "neither rebellious nor were faithful to God, but were only for themselves"; and also the shade of him who made the great renunciation, the Pope Celestine, who in his weak piety withdrew into a Monastery, rather than face the task of contending with the evils of the world. "Forthwith," says the poet, "I understood and felt that this was the crew of caitiffs, hateful to God, and to God's enemies." "Mercy and justice alike disdain them; let us not speak of them, but look and pass them by." Dante's high strong spirit can comprehend energy and purpose, even when exerted in the cause of evil; he has keen sympathy even for some of those whom he regards as for great sins righteously doomed to everlasting punishment. What he cannot comprehend, is the man who does not rise to a great opportunity, who hesitates between two opinions, who seeks to withdraw from the conflict, who shirks responsibility.

Now in the present day, there are many things which tend to modify such a temper of mind. We still indeed despise cowardice in its most obvious form; we demand of any one who would claim our respect, that when honour calls him, he shall be ready to face danger and even death, with firmness and self-command. Nor can it be said that this kind of courage is less common than

it was in former days. But it is to be feared that another kind of weakness, the weakness of halting between two opinions, wavering between good and evil, reluctance to commit one's self once for all to the service of that which we judge to be best, or to take a definite side in the great struggle for truth, for right, for charity which is ever going on in the world, is in a special sense, the vice of the present day; and that Dante's condemnation of those who were not for God, nor against Him, but only for themselves, would reach many of us.

There are many reasons for this, some of them not in themselves without weight. For one thing, it does not seem so easy now as in some former times, to discern what is the good, and what is the evil cause. For Homer's hero the one true omen, the one divine direction, was to fight for the fatherland. To the Athenian, the cause of his city was the cause of Athene; and it was not till the time of Socrates that the thought of some wider conflicting duty dawned upon him. And so for Deborah and Elijah, the God of Israel was the Lord of Hosts, and neither the one nor the other had the slightest hesitation in dooming the Syrian General, Sisera, or the priests of Baal, to death. One clear but narrow rule seemed to point out the path of right; and he who fell short of it,

who "came not to the help of the 'Lord against the mighty," could not pretend that he was actuated by any motive but unwillingness to do his duty. And when Saul spared even the cattle of the Amalekites, and pled that he spared them to make a greater sacrifice to God, he met at once the stern reproof of the prophet Samuel: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

The general widening of our moral and intellectual horizon has made this simple way of opposing good and evil impossible to us. Christianity itself has taught us to sympathise with men of all classes and nations, to see the same humanity manifesting itself in them all; and this sympathy and insight will not let us regard our national foes as essentially the servants of an evil principle. We cannot echo the blessings pronounced by Deborah on the treacherous act of Jael, or regard the slaughter of Baal's priests as a just measure for the propagation of true religion. We have learnt to recognise in all religions at least a partial expression of that reverence for a divine Power which consecrates human life, and binds men together in families and nations. Modern ideas of evolution have taught us to regard the great controversies and wars which have taken place in the past between

* different parties, different races, different religions, as rarely, if ever, a pure conflict between good and evil, but rather, in many cases, as issues in which important interests of humanity were maintained by both sides; so that it would have been a calamity if either side had been absolutely victorious over the other. And the more we discover this in regard to the past, the more we are led to ask ourselves whether it is not also the case with many of the issues most hotly contested in the present day. Such thoughts are, so to speak, in the air, and even those who are not directly conscious of them, are indirectly influenced by them, and are led to regard the exclusive spirit which sees good only in one cause or object, as bigoted and irrational. Few educated men accept, without considerable discount for exaggeration, the violent language which political and religious parties still sometimes hurl at each other. And even if they are loyal to the side which, by deliberate choice, or by tradition and custom, has become their own, yet they can hardly feel, in their calmer moments, that unmeasured devotion to the one, and antagonism to the other, which was possible in simpler times. But there is a dark side to all this; for those very wider views of things which produce tolerance, are apt to produce also a sceptical spirit,

which weakens the springs of manly energy. We are not able to split life in two with a hatchet as our fathers did, or to see all white on one side, and all black on the other; and therefore we are apt to lose the consciousness that there is a real battle between good and evil going on in the world; and find it hard to realise that we are called to take up arms on one side or the other. The complexity of life, the difficulty of seeing our way clearly, the constant discussion which tends to awaken doubt as to every course that can be taken, and the fact that good men are ranged on both sides in almost every controversy—all these things seem to offer excuses to the man who shrinks from the decisive choice that would make him the servant of any one cause or principle, and who prefers, in the old phrase, “to cultivate his garden,” that is, to devote his main energies to looking after his own interests, and in other things to drift with the current that is strongest.

These considerations have a special bearing upon the case of those who, like many of you, are for the first time beginning to have their minds opened to wider views of life, and to learn that every question has two sides. The boy, unless he is morbid, has seldom occasion to question himself as to his beliefs or his moral rules

of life. He naturally assumes these questions to be settled, and for him the choice is simply one of obedience or rebellion. But in the wider life of the University, it must cease to be so. The young man inevitably becomes conscious that every doctrine he has been taught has been questioned, and indeed that there are many strong arguments against, as well as for it. He learns that, in spite of the general advance of science, on the most vital questions of human existence there are no dogmas which have been settled by universal consent, no *quod semper quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, to which it is possible to point. Whether he looks to politics, or to social ethics, or to religion, he finds controversies which he cannot settle by the simple method of recognising that the good are on one side, and the bad on the other. He finds that everything he has most revered is open to criticism, and is criticised with great force by writers whom it is impossible to treat as insignificant.

The impulse of growing powers also often tempts him to rebel against tradition and authority, and to try and discover a new way for himself; and the very sense of untried liberty seems to call upon him to give way to it. Having little experience of the difficulties of life, and measuring all things by the vague idealism of

youth, he soon finds that it is easier to criticise than to appreciate, easier to find objections than answers, easier to see points on which the old structure of belief and life is beginning to give way than to penetrate to the perennial principles upon which it is based. Hence we do not wonder to find some young men, and these not the least able, becoming for a time iconoclastic, sceptical, sometimes even cynical. And no wise man would treat such characteristics as merely an exhibition of youthful vanity. It is as natural that young men should be disappointed with the world on their first superficial view of it, as it is natural to men a little more advanced in life to get too contented with the *status quo*, if it secures to themselves a certain measure of personal success and comfort. One could often wish that this kind of youthful disappointment should continue a little longer, if it were only combined with a wider and more sympathetic view of things; for the tolerance of later years too often means that men have given up cherishing any higher ideal. Yet, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that there is a special danger accompanying the emancipation, the free discussion, the criticism and scepticism, into which most thoughtful young men are initiated in their University life. The danger is that the broad line of division between truth

and untruth should seem to be obliterated, that a feeling of the uncertainty of things should make them readier to listen to the sophistry of the passions, and that in place of the idea of life as a conflict of good against evil should be put the idea of it as a struggle for nothing better than personal success and advancement.

These are the dangers of the present state of our intellectual life for young men who are beginning to participate in the spirit of the time ; and I should not be disposed to minimise them. At the same time, in spiritual things we generally find that the same influences which bring danger, also bring with them the forces that can meet and conquer it. We cannot, in our day, have so much of the zeal that comes from a narrow and concentrated view of one aspect of things, from untroubled faith in unquestioned dogmas, and unhesitating subjection to fixed rules of conduct. But on the other hand, it is easier for us to escape an evil that went with such faith and obedience, namely, the tendency to identify what is essential with what is accidental, the ideas of truth and right with some particular form in which they are embodied ; the cause of God with the cause of our party, our nation, or our church. It is easier for us than it was formerly, to learn to recognise good in all the different shapes in

which it presents itself, and to avoid the error of fighting against it because it comes before us in some unfamiliar guise. And when we remember the awful calamities brought upon the human race in former times by men who honestly thought they were doing God service in forcing upon others the exact type of institution or belief with which, in their own minds, all goodness was identified, it cannot be regarded as a little thing that moral and religious principles have become, or are becoming, disconnected from what were at best particular, and, it may be, transitory, forms of their manifestation. Through much wrong and suffering, through religious wars and persecutions, through fierce controversies and conflicts, in which all charity and respect for others were lost ; through violent collisions of human passion and prejudice, the divine education of the human race has gone on slowly and inevitably, that education which is teaching men what are the real good and the real evils of human life. And if the result has been partly negative, if there has been a cooling of zeal and a weakening of faith, if it is not so easy as it once seemed to be to discern a clear line marked out before us through all the difficulties of human existence, a bright and conspicuous standard to which we can rally in the battle of

life, yet all this may be regarded as not too great a price to pay for greater light and freedom. The wider toleration of modern times may be regarded as due only to indifference and scepticism, and clever books have been written to show that it is so. But in reality there is always a positive behind every negative cause; and what the chilling of man's faith ultimately points to is that the great truths are separating themselves from the little ones, the eternal verities of the divine life in man from the passing phases and adjuncts of human tradition. This separation can never in any generation be accomplished without many searchings of heart, without much weakness and failure. But it is the greatest of mistakes to confuse the throes of new birth with the agonies of death, and he who looks beneath the surface may see in the agitation and uncertainty of the world, in the doubt and trouble of our intellectual life, the indications of the dawn of a faith in God and man, wider, calmer, freer from illusions, and more comprehensive, though not less keen and earnest in its charity, than has ever been seen in the world before.

There is, no doubt, a danger in yielding to any optimistic dream, and in shutting our eyes to the many dark and ominous shadows which hang over the intellectual and moral life of our

time. But there is a greater danger in losing sight of the ideal in our immediate life, and thinking that it is to be found only in the past, or in the future. In every age, the ideal of the present is hidden from superficial eyes by the petty accidents, the trivial round of each day's common life, by the inevitable exaggeration of that which lies nearest to us; while the distant past stands out in grand and simple outline, and the future is whatever you choose to paint it. But it is above all important that we should get over the tendency which besets us, to regard our own life as commonplace, and that we should realise the great issues that are immediately waiting for our own action. If the old Jewish prophet could see the stars in their courses fighting against Sisera, could feel that his little struggle was part of the great conflict of good and evil in the universe, much more may we, in this age when man's knowledge of the movement of history has become so much greater, when we can trace so much more clearly the reciprocal influences of men and nations upon each other, when we can discern how the spirit of Christianity has been very slowly and gradually but inevitably overcoming and transforming the life of men, and gaining victories over the spirit of the world and also of the Church itself—much more may

we realise that our life is not an aimless or meaningless vicissitude of events, but an essential step in the great process. And if in view of the many dark features of the present state of the world, we are sometimes tempted to believe that there has been no real progress, I think we may gain new courage by reminding ourselves of one great characteristic of our time to which I have already referred, namely, that in no previous age has the faith of good men been more concentrated on the great, simple things of human life, as distinguished from those that are secondary or adventitious. For, in the first place, there is in the minds of a larger number than ever before, a conviction of the absolute value of truth in all its forms. Men have come to see the necessity of realising the nature of the universe in which they live, and of dealing with the facts as they are, and not as they would like them to be. They have learnt the necessity of understanding all the conditions of human life, physical, economical, moral, and spiritual, in order that they may deal effectively with the ills that flesh is heir to. They are, therefore, in less danger of assuming that they can cure these ills by any easy nostrum, or any specific that meets the needs of only one part of man's complex nature. Again, they have learnt, or are in the way of learning,

that the great and vital things in our spiritual life are, first, the moral purity of the individual, and, secondly, the binding together of individuals as members of families and nations, of the great society of humanity, in relations of reciprocal support and affection. This, at least, is now a generally acknowledged ideal, however far our practice may fall short of it. In religion, too, men have learnt—or may easily learn—in this generation, that the one thing necessary is not dogmatic correctness, but devotion to the cause of God and humanity; and that however important it is that our thoughts about God, about Christ, about the relations of God to man, and of man to God, should be as adequate as we can make them, yet the root of the matter lies in the spirit of Christ, and not in doctrines about Him; in the living realisation of the nearness of our finite life to the infinite, and not in the theological exactness of our creed; or at least, that the latter is valuable just so far as, and no further than it shows itself in the former. It is also true, I think, that we are able to recognise more easily than those before us, that the outward order and unity of Christians is valuable only as it is an indication of, or a means to, inner unity; that many of the differences of creed and life that seem to divide men are only the necessary.

result of the different aspects in which truth on such great subjects must communicate itself to different minds; and that, therefore, they ought rather to unite than to separate those who recognise that the divine spirit speaks to different men in different ways, revealing to them most clearly those aspects of truth which are most suited to their needs. In this point of view, we ought no more to regret the differences among good men, than we regret that our armies can no longer be passive, unthinking masses of men, ruled and wielded by one man, who thinks for all.

This last comparison suggests one important point in regard to the difficulties which you, as educated men, will have now to encounter. The time was when doubt and difficulty did not affect many members of the Christian community, and perhaps only a few among the clergy—when one or two master-minds, a St. Athanasius or a St. Augustine, with a few others who followed or opposed them, bore all the weight of Christian controversy, while the great body of the members of the Church were content to follow in their footsteps. Even in modern times after the Reformation, men moved intellectually, so to speak, in great masses, led by a few who thought and spoke for all. *Now* the tasks of the spiritual

life have become individualised. As under our modern system of warfare it is becoming necessary for the Commander-in-chief to leave more to the independent judgment of the subordinate generals, and for these again to trust more to the free agency of the officers and men under them, so in our spiritual life it has become more necessary for each of us to live by the unborrowed light within him, and to use what gifts God has given him to solve his own moral and intellectual difficulties. We need, indeed, as ever, the large inspirations of our betters, the lights that come to us from the great thinkers and poets, from the great moral and religious teachers who read for us the signs of the times, and speak to us the mighty words of wisdom that feed our souls. We need also the nearer ministrations of lesser men, whose teaching has reached our ears, and whose example has taught us the possibility of living a pure and righteous life. We need the immediate touch of goodness and wisdom in our fathers and our brethren, who are only a little way before us in the road on which we are going; for we are all dependent upon our surroundings, and it is hard for us to keep our light undimmed, unless we find it reflected back upon us from the faces of our friends. Still, we cannot by their aid escape—no educated man at least can

now escape, as all but a few escaped in earlier times—the necessity of facing the difficulty for ourselves, of giving at least to ourselves the reason of the faith that is in us, of reproducing in our own minds the truths which we receive from others. It is natural that men should shrink from such a burden, and many do shrink from it, through distrust in themselves, and desire to lean upon something stronger. “Who am I, with my limited ability and knowledge, that I should try to form an independent judgment on such great questions?” But let us take courage, let every young man take courage, and believe that, as the burden of an individual life is not laid upon him by himself, it is no presumption for him to think that the strength is his, or will be given to him, to bear it, if only he meets it with simplicity and sincerity of heart. It is not to men of exceptional genius or unusual knowledge that the words were said: “If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light.” A man can always, if he does not darken his eyes by unfaithfulness, get truth enough to live by; and that truth, if he holds to it, will widen out and grow, till his course becomes as clear and certain as was the narrower path to the men of an earlier day. What he has to fear most—after all the differences of the past and the

present have been allowed for—is not so much the deliberate choice of evil before good, of Baal instead of God, but rather the feeble and relaxed spirit which refuses to choose, which shirks responsibility, and which ends, as Dante said, in reducing life to the service of self. What he has to fear is the “unlit lamp and the ungirt loins,” that failure of heart and will which gradually empties life of its higher meaning, and loses hold of all ideal aims.

Before concluding these remarks, I wish to say a few words about what has befallen this College in the past year. It has been a year of trial and suffering for the nation, in which we have borne our share. We are just setting up a memorial in our Chapel passage to those members of the College who lost their life by battle or disease in South Africa. But I wish now to speak of those losses which have affected our immediate College life. We have, during the past year, lost three members of our staff, who in their several ways contributed greatly to that life, and of each of them I wish to say a few words.

Though he was laid aside for some time before his death, many of you know how much we owe to *John Farmer*, who for fifteen years gave the best of his energy to the musical education

of the College, and especially to the organising of our Sunday Concerts. He was a man of much humour, of a kindly and generous nature, who was inspired with a genuine enthusiasm for music, and who always looked upon it, in the old Platonic way, as not only the purest of pleasures, but as a great educating influence.

Those who have a better right to speak than I, have told me that he had an almost unerring taste and sympathy for what is really excellent in music, while he felt an utter detestation for everything that is weakly sentimental, or vulgarly exciting. It is mainly to him that we owe it, that these Concerts, which have formed so peculiar a feature of our College life, have been so high in their musical character, and so pure in their tendency: and I hope that the spirit which was in him will always guide our efforts in this direction.

At an earlier period of the last academic year we lost *Sir John Conroy*, who for ten years presided over the physical and chemical studies of the College. I do not think I am speaking the language of partial affection, when I say that I never met a man of purer spirit. His goodness seemed rather the spontaneous outflow of the heart than a conscious effort of the will. His courtesy, his humility, his unaffected piety,

his simple love of what is beautiful and good, made his friends feel as if in his company, they breathed a purer air. He was deeply interested in the College life, and it was one of the hardest trials of the last two years of his life that illness prevented him from fully sharing in it, as he had been used to do. He took the deepest interest not only in his immediate pupils, but in many other members of the College, and was ready to take much trouble to help them in any difficulty. Some cases of this kind have come under my notice, and there must have been many others of which I knew nothing. His fitting epitaph is written in the Beatitude: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Of our latest loss, that of *Evelyn Abbott*, for twenty-nine years tutor of this College, it is even more difficult for me to speak; and perhaps it is not necessary to say much, for he was working among us up to the end of last term, and some of you were his immediate pupils. His whole life, for more than thirty years, was a triumph over difficulties which for most would have been crushing. I remember him in his undergraduate years as an apparently vigorous young man, of singularly attractive appearance, with whom no one could have

associated the idea of ill-health. But there was some spinal weakness which soon after developed itself, and since that time, he was never able to sit up, but obliged to do all his work in a reclining posture. These circumstances subjected him continually to much discomfort, even when he did not suffer positive pain. The weariness of such a life those of us who enjoy good health and the power of freely using our limbs can hardly realise. Yet during the last eight years, in which I have known him more intimately, I cannot recollect more than a passing word of allusion to the hardship of his lot. If he ever felt any bitterness of rebellion at it—as it is hardly possible he should not—he had entirely conquered such a feeling. And what struck one most in seeing him daily was the almost unvarying serenity and cheerfulness, which lighted up his face as if from some sunlight within. This is not the place to speak of the excellence of his literary work as a classical scholar, as a historian, as a biographer; but I think that my colleagues would bear me out in saying that we regarded him as one of the wisest of counsellors, in any practical difficulty, and pupils of his have told me how much he helped them by his ripe scholarship and knowledge, and also by the sympathy and consideration which he showed

for their individual wants and characters. One of them writes : " His influence was one of those silent penetrating influences which many of us felt, I know, very strongly, but about which we felt more than we said. The quiet evenings when we read to him in the study of his house are among the happiest recollections I have of my Oxford days." All Balliol men who knew him will cherish his memory as one of the bravest and most brotherly of men, as one who gave his best powers to the service of the College, and whose life was a remarkable proof that it is possible for a human soul to win a victory over the most untoward circumstances.

These three members of our College society were men of very different characters and gifts ; but I think we may say of each of them that he chose with no hesitating will to devote his powers to that which he felt to be best, and that, in spite of human weakness or through it, they were made strong to work out their choice in life-long service to mankind. " They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them ; " and we must henceforth go on without the strength and encouragement of their living presence, nor can our praise or blame affect them any more. It is for us to resolve that in whatever may be our vocation, we shall

serve the good cause with something of the same energy and faithfulness which was in them, and that our lives, whatever their value, small or great, shall be like theirs, a contribution to the forces which raise, and not to those which lower the level of human society. On you especially, as young men who have here opportunities of education which are not given to many, and who in a few years will be occupying important posts in the civil services, or in the professions, will soon be laid a great part of the responsibility of maintaining the purity and energy of the public life of the country ; and your University life will be a failure, unless the result of it is that all the weight of your mind and character shall be cast on the side of God against Baal, of purity against impurity, of light against darkness, of love against hate.

TRUE PURITY

“UNTO the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”

TITUS 1 15.

Nothing is more remarkable in religious history than the development of the idea of purity. As always, it begins with the outer symbol, the cleansing and purifying of the body and the things with which it comes into contact. Cleanliness at a special stage of the religious life of mankind was not only next to godliness, but we might almost say, it was godliness. To uncivilised man it was an important step in the upward way when he learnt to show his reverence for his God by ceremonial ablutions, and to consider himself unfit to approach the Shrine unless he had removed every vestige of uncleanness from his person and his garments. With such purification, he seemed to put off his baser and commoner self, to free himself from all debasing contacts, and to prepare himself for entering into closer relations with the divine. Nor can we regard this as simply an illusion of superstition. For, in the first place, as Goethe tells us, reverence for that which is above us is the root out of which all respect for others and for ourselves must spring; and the cleansing

that begins in the sanctuary will not stop until it has been extended to the whole life. And, in the second place, the outward symbol is already a part, and no inconsiderable part of the reality it symbolises. There is a natural association between "clean hands and a pure heart," and every one recognises that the purifying of the outer man, and of his environment, is a great step towards his redemption from evil influences. It is, therefore, no arbitrary connection of thought which makes the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews conjoin, as the two conditions of "drawing near to God," "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

At the same time, it is easy to see how the symbol, in spite of its appropriateness, may be perverted into a substitute for that which it signifies. The washings and cleansings which are the natural expression of religious feeling on its way to the purification of the whole life, come to be regarded as the complete discharge of religious duty, and the only purification of life that is required. Either because the idea of outward purity is all that the devotee is able to reach, or because he is loath to subject himself to deeper obligations, the strict observance of cleansing rites becomes the one thing needful in his eyes, and the

real purpose of such practices gets lost in the complexity of ceremonial. The outward is severed from the inward, and even becomes opposed to it; so that the religious reformer has to reject it altogether, to denounce a service of God which consists in the "washing of cups and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables," and to proclaim that it is something else than eating with unwashen hands that defiles a man.

The Christian view of the method in which man's life is to be purified is declared in the New Testament to differ in two important points from that which had prevailed in earlier religion. In the first place, the new law of life goes beneath the acts and deals with the motives from which they spring. In the main, Judaism had sought to elevate the life of man by prescribing what he should and what he should not do. But Christ declares that this way of dealing with the problem is inadequate and uncertain. It is the essential lesson of the Sermon on the Mount that purification must henceforth proceed from within outwards, and not from without inwards. "There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man." Once free the heart from evil thoughts and evil desires, and everything else will take care of itself.

"Love," as St. Augustine once said with his grand rhetorical emphasis, "love, and do as you please. . . ." And if there is no such exaggeration in the words of Christ, if indeed He guards against a possible misunderstanding by the declaration that not one jot or tittle of the Law can pass away, yet the whole purport and aim of His teaching is not to lay down special commands, or to insist on special practices, but to inspire His followers with a new spirit of life, of which the right acts and abstentions will be the natural and unforced expression. 'Let your eye be single, and your whole body shall be full of light.'

It is a kindred thought that is suggested to us in the text, the thought, namely, that purity consists not in withdrawing from certain objects and interests, or in avoiding the society of certain persons, but in the spirit in which we contemplate and deal with them. The central idea of Pharisaism was separation and withdrawal, separation of the people of God from the heathen and the publican, withdrawal from all interests which were considered worldly, into the narrow circle of a religious life which was fenced in on every side by peculiar rites and observances. And this separatist tendency soon passed into the Christian Church, and was confirmed and strengthened by Gnostic theories as to the impurity of matter, and the

necessity of freeing the soul from its debasing contact. Such theories are frequently referred to in the later books of the New Testament. "Wherefore," asks St. Paul, "if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world," that is, if ye have got beyond the external rules and prescriptions of the pre-Christian age, "why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances: Touch not, taste not, handle not?" As against the gospel of mere abstention, St. Paul preaches the doctrine that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." And in the text, the idea of Christian liberty is proclaimed in all its boldness, breaking through all the cautions and restraints, all the external limitations which men have put upon it. "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure": in other words, the line between pure and impure is not to be drawn where such theories try to draw it. There are no classes of things or persons which are essentially evil. It is our way of looking at them and handling them that makes them evil to us. There is nothing in the material world, nothing in the objects of the senses, which is inherently vile, if our eyes are not darkened to its true meaning, and our hands do not turn

it to an evil use. On the contrary, every one of them has a special place and value in the order of the world, and it is our blindness, and not the nature of things that makes it vile to us. Nothing in the world which God has made, is in itself common or unclean. And the same is true of all the natural impulses of the human heart, and of all the interests of human life. Love, and the affections of the family, are in themselves pure and beautiful things; and the poetry that is said to idealise them, is only discovering their real meaning. We are not to treat politics or trade, art or literature, or science, as if they were things which the Christian can only touch at his peril. Everyone of them has an essential function in relation to the highest life of man, and Christians are taking a cowardly course if they retreat from them as secular and worldly, and fortify themselves in pious isolation. They may, indeed, save themselves from some dangers by such seclusion, but it is at a great loss; for the interest which religious men condemn as worldly, and even impious, is apt by their very withdrawal from it to *become* worldly and impious; and as they cannot destroy it, it must continually war upon the religious life that excludes it. The Christianity that does not sanctify all our existence, material and spiritual,

economical, social and political, is essentially insecure; for it has abandoned part of its territory to the enemy, and thus surrendered to him a position from which he can harass and weaken its own life.

The doctrine which I have just expressed, is an essential part of Christianity, it was involved in it from the first, and is definitely expressed in the passages I have quoted; yet it may fairly be said that it has been reserved for our own day to grasp its full meaning. For by the necessity of the time, the earliest Christians were more occupied with another aspect of the truth. In the first preaching of the Gospel, the idea of the conversion or revolution of life, through which men must pass in becoming followers of Christ, was naturally more prominent than the new view of Nature and man which Christianity involved. And, in later times, the Church rapidly developed in an ascetic direction. It tended to draw more and more deeply the lines of division which separated it from the world, and to give a more and more negative aspect to its doctrine. Christ had said not only that he who would save his life must lose it, but that he who did lose his life would save it; but His followers seemed almost to forget the latter part of the lesson, or to regard it as referring entirely to life in another world. Life

in this world they were inclined to treat as purer and more religious in proportion to what it gives up. Give up trade and politics; give up art and literature, and the science of finite things; give up freedom and property, and family life with all its charities and interests; give up, as far as possible, the satisfaction even of the natural appetites of hunger and thirst, and embrace poverty, suffering, and shame as your portion on earth—so only will you be in the fullest sense a servant of the Cross. This was the view of mediaeval piety at its highest and best, as it spoke from the lips of a St. Bernard or St. Francis; though we must always remember that theirs was not a barren asceticism, but that in its doctrine of the pure love of man, of all men, and even, in the case of St. Francis, of all nature and living creatures, it contained the germ of the restoration of all things. But from all, even the wisest of that age, the full meaning of this further lesson of Christianity was hidden. And we should not be doing them much injustice if we said that nature seemed to them, or to many of them, a dead and vulgar thing, unworthy of the attention of a Christian; and that the life of man, so far as it was directed to any of the concerns of his finite existence, was regarded as a doubtful and dangerous business. For them,

therefore, the great task of religion and morality was to reduce our earthly interests to the smallest possible dimensions; and even Christian charity, the love of men in general, the one pure affection which was to take the place of all others, was a love that sought not to save men *in* the world, but to deliver them *from* it.

It was, however, inevitable that with the progress of time the other side of the truth should come into prominence, that it should be seen that the highest meaning and purpose of life is not isolated from all its secular objects and interests, but can be discovered and realised in and through them all. And it is, as I have said, the characteristic note of modern thought to find the ideal, not out of the world, but *in* the world; as it is the characteristic note of our best ethical endeavour to seek to regenerate the secular interests of life, and to strive after salvation for mankind, not hereafter only, but here and now. The lesson that all things are pure to the mind that does not bring impurity with it, has been applied both to nature and to human life. Thus the general tendency of the Middle Ages, as I have said, was to look upon the natural world with suspicion, to regard its wilder and stormier scenes with superstitious terror, as the haunt of evil powers, and its softer

and gentler aspects as the source of a doubtful charm, hostile to man's innocence and peace. Modern poetry, on the other hand, has taught us to see in nature something closely akin to that which is highest within us; and in particular, to recognise the essential beauty of forms and powers in which an earlier age saw only gloom and terror. Again, modern literature has decisively broken with the tradition that special classes and interests should be selected as alone worthy of artistic treatment. It has penetrated every sphere of human life with invasive sympathy, and exhibited the wonder of the evolution of human character and destiny in the most vulgar and sordid conditions. If there is one thing more than another which we may regard as the authentic stamp of the highest literary productions of the modern spirit, it is this breaking of the barriers between man and nature, and between man and man—this insistence upon the idea that nothing which is natural is common or unclean.

Sometimes the expression of this tendency has taken forms which are extravagant and audacious, and which show a forgetfulness of the other aspect of the truth, the need of inner purification for anyone who would find all things pure. Nor can we wonder that such extravagancies should at times call forth a scathing

protest from writers who, like Tolstoi, have a deep sense of the corruptions and disorders of modern society, and who can see no possibility of curing them except by returning to the method of asceticism, by the renunciation of everything that is called civilisation, and the withdrawal of men from the political and even from the domestic life. But in spite of such discordant voices, and of the real outward discords that call them forth, I think we must regard it as one of the best things in our time, and as a true development of Christianity, that it seeks so earnestly to vindicate the essential purity and sacredness of all the finite interests of man's life, and to work out man's weal, not by withdrawing him from them, but by developing their highest meaning. Through the contrition and sorrow and self-despair of the Middle Ages, the world has at length found its way, as it were, to the light of day. And though each of us must pass, in a sense, through the same experience, must die to ourselves in order that we may live, though no one can attain to a higher existence without the pain of renunciation, yet we may fairly rejoice that we have been born in a time when the voice of courage and of hope is more powerful than the voice of fear and regret, and when the idea of saving the

world has begun to predominate over the idea of saving men from it. As St. Paul called on the Galatians who were tempted to go back to Judaism, and put themselves under the narrow prescriptions of the Law, to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free," so we may say that through the spirit of the time, which is the fruit of long ages of Christian experience, Christ is calling upon us to stand fast in the liberty that has been won for us, and to cease from the narrowness that finds God and goodness only in special practices or forms which are supposed to be characteristic of the religious life; to rise above the imperfect realisation of Christianity that separates the Church from the State, the secular from the sacred; above the gospel of despair that is content with what is called converting men, and saving them from the evil of the world, and does not aim at raising their whole lives, and giving them all a share in the best results of human civilisation.

"To the pure all things are pure." The practical meaning of this text it is not difficult to see. It bids us open our eyes, not to what is worst, but to that which is best in men and things, and to regard the latter and not the former as that which is truest and deepest in

them. We are too often disposed to regard the man who detects and suspects evil as the man of sharpest insight and intelligence; and we are apt to pride ourselves on not being taken in by superficial appearances of good, but able to see through the mask. The detracting pessimistic spirit that sees keenly the defects of men, and does not hope very much from anyone, that looks upon life as a series of disappointments and vain efforts without much result, is not seldom regarded as showing true knowledge of the world. But in this way of thinking, two things are forgotten. In the first place, it is forgotten that we are apt to find in men and things what we seek. Our view of nature and human nature (even our view of God), is always dyed more or less deeply in the colours of our own inner life. Some aspects of this are often noticed. Nature seems continually to echo the moods of our minds: in joy the very heaven seems to exult with us, and as Wordsworth says:

“The clouds that gather round the setting sun,
Do take a sober colouring from the eye
That hath kept watch o’er man’s mortality.”

And the same thing also is true of our intercourse with our fellowmen. The evil-hearted man is constantly finding signs of evil where others would hardly suspect them, indications of

insincerity even in the words of the most honest of men, traces of selfishness even in the acts of the most benevolent. And, on the other hand, those who are pure-minded and loving in temper, are quick to discern evidences of kindness, of generosity, of an unextinguished instinct for truth and goodness even in the most degraded; and what is more, to him who thus discerns evil or good in other men, by the very fact of his sympathy, the evil or the good is drawn out, and made to show itself more distinctly. Do we not often find that the open-hearted man opens the hearts of others, and that the man of narrow and suspicious temper shuts them and repels them? Thus a man's experience of the world tends to confirm him in the way of thinking with which he meets it. Even our religious views, our views of the whole system of things, and of the Divine Being who is its source and end, often reflect our own character, and get a seeming confirmation from our experience of life. "With the merciful," says the Psalmist, "thou wilt show thyself merciful: with the upright thou wilt show thyself upright: with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward."

But in the second place, this must not be taken to mean that the reality depends on our

opinions about it, or that good and evil are mixed indiscriminately in the world, but that each man dwells on those aspects of it which are most kindred with his own character. Evil and good are both undoubtedly present in our life, and to all who have got beyond the instinctive trustfulness of childhood, and who know anything of things of the world, evil must be a frequent experience. One to whom "all things are pure," must, we are apt to say, be one who is blind to the most obvious facts, he must be one whose optimistic temper is making him ignore what is continually happening around him. If a man finds nothing but goodness in a world that is full of suffering and wrong, if he can walk the streets of our cities, or even read a daily paper, with his eye averted from all that is evil or unclean, he may deserve some credit for healthiness of mind, but surely not for sound or impartial consideration of the realities of life. Nay, would not such thorough-going optimism argue a real want of sympathy, and an ostrich-like ignoring of facts?

The answer to this is, that it is not blindness to evil that characterises those who are really pure of heart, but the power of looking through it, and beyond it; the power which Christ showed upon the Cross, when He looked

through the virulence of the conspiring priests, and the fury of the ignorant mob, to something in the human heart, in the heart of those very men, that could not have hated goodness had it really known it. "Father, forgive them, for they *know not* what they do." It is the one essential lesson of Christianity, that the good in man is, after all, deeper than the evil; and that, therefore, he is the true discernor of human nature, who sees through the evil to the good which is beneath it, and which is capable of overcoming it. He is not the true judge of what men are whose eye fastens on their defects and errors, their corruption and degradation, but he who can see through these to the indestructible image of God, to the still surviving moral and spiritual capacities, nay, who can discern even in the evil itself the blind effort after a higher satisfaction than the world can give. It is not, therefore, mere ignorance of evil that makes all things pure to the pure; it is some power which goes with purity of mind, of piercing through the husk to the kernel, and recognising in what to others seem only the feeble remains of right feeling a power which, if it could be called forth and developed, would overcome everything else.

It is this great insight that gives elevation to the thought of Plato, and makes it an anticipation of

Christianity, as when he tells us that those who would know the true nature of the soul, must look at it "not as it now is, obscured by contact with the world, like the sea-god Glaucus, whose original image can hardly be discerned, because his natural members are broken off and crushed and damaged by the waves in all sorts of ways, and incrustations have grown over them of seaweed and shells and stones, so that he is more like to some monster than he is to his own natural form." To see the soul's true nature, Plato declares that we must penetrate through these obscurations to those possibilities of intelligence and goodness which they hide from us. In our own day, as I have said, such faith in the possibilities of humanity has inspired much of our best imaginative literature. And in pressing home such ideas, literature has been simply following and justifying the faith with which many a humble individual has sought to teach the highest truth he knew to savage tribes, who to ordinary eyes were almost like animals; or to the even less hopeful classes at home, the pauperised and degraded residuum of our large cities—the faith, namely, that there is something to appeal to in every human heart, something that is deeper than the dulness of savage life, and the hardness of perverted civilisation.

But we must look also at the reverse of the medal. If the pure heart can see good even in evil and degradation, because it sees through it to something deeper and better, the impure heart darkens all it looks upon. "To the defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled." "Defiled and unbelieving," the two things go together. With the tainting of mind, the capacity for faith, faith in God and faith in man, equally disappears. Evil thoughts, if they are indulged and cherished, narrow our life and empty it of its meaning; for they destroy the possibility of believing in good. They collect degrading associations even around things which are in themselves quite pure and innocent. They make us quick to detect evil in others, quick to see the imperfections that mingle with all human things, and slow to see or believe in anything else. And the worst of it is that, by this readiness to evil-thinking and evil-speaking, we are gradually narrowing our world, and making all things common, if not unclean to ourselves.

There is an epigrammatic French saying that "to understand everything is to pardon everything," which has as much truth as is usually contained in an epigram. But it would perhaps be truer to put the thought in a negative way

and to say that he who will not pardon anything, who fastens on every evil and imperfection of human things and will not look beyond it, can understand nothing. What most of all narrows us, what, as we advance in years, is most apt to impoverish our lives, and to drag them down to a lower plane, what most paralyses our efforts for good, is just that unbelief that comes of a want of insight into that deeper current of life, that deeper necessity of human hearts, which tends, silently but increasingly, to lift men towards a better future. Many men become hedged about with constraint and fear, just because they are constantly seeing evil, and have lost the power to see anything else. And what is worse is that in this way many things do actually become evil or impure to us, because we have become accustomed to look almost entirely on their evil side. Some men have to regret bitterly that there are parts of the world, elements of human nature, interests of life, which, however good in themselves, have for them become stained by evil associations. And if it be so, then the only safe course for them is to avoid such things altogether. This is the meaning of the Gospel saying: "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee." It is the justification for ascetic counsels in which men have so often

found salvation from evils which they could not overcome. To anyone who feels that certain things, however allowable or even pure and noble they may be to others, are full of temptation to himself, the best counsel we can give is that he should absolutely turn his back upon them. Some men, indeed, may have so desecrated human existence by vulgar and base thoughts and deeds, that they cannot find safety except by withdrawing from even the most innocent interests and joys of life, and confining themselves in a kind of religious prison; and for these it were better that they should abandon everything,—art, and society, and domestic life, that they may save their souls alive. But if such men turn their own experience into a creed, and see nothing but badness in all the life of men outside of one narrow path of religious life, they are transferring to the world in general what is true only for themselves. For many of us, perhaps for everyone of us, it is necessary to renounce some things, even things innocent in themselves, in order to keep our moral life pure. But let us not libel the world, nor put into it the darkness that is in our own minds; and let us remember that the better part belongs to those elect souls, who are able to find good in all things, and in all men, even those that are most degraded.

To young men, whose eyes are as yet unclouded by the mists of worldly experience, there is here a special lesson. It is that they should be jealous to keep the world, to keep nature and human nature, above all to keep the primal affections and relations of life, from base or ignoble associations. We are all continually exposed to experiences which tend to lower our ways of looking at life. All things in the world, all the concerns of life, have two sides or aspects, and it depends upon ourselves which of these we shall make our predominant point of view in regarding them. If we train ourselves to look at them in one way, everything becomes little and mean, if not impure. By that censorious, half-malicious talk which, sometimes without any direct evil intent, suggests bad motives everywhere, and drags down the noblest characters; by persistently dwelling on what is called the seamy side of things; by encouraging in ourselves ways of thinking in which the sensuous element of our existence is separated from all the sentiments and associations which give it a higher meaning, we may take all the poetry out of the world, and empty life of everything that feeds the imagination or the spirit, until, in the words of St. Paul, nothing is pure to us, but "even our mind and conscience is defiled." In this way, the

world is made vile and vulgar to us, till we can find no safety except in renouncing it altogether.

On the other hand, the young man who, from the beginning, accustoms himself to look for what is good in men and things, and learns to detect it even when it is hid from superficial eyes, is taking the one course which will prevent life from becoming narrow and commonplace, if not evil to him, with increasing years. We cannot promise him that he will escape the struggles and sorrows that come to all. But we can promise that experience will not take from him the zest and the wonder of the world, and that, on the contrary, life will become wider and greater as it goes on. The great Apostle, writing in his age to the Philippians, gathers up the lessons he had taught them in one emphatic word: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." He who learns early to obey this counsel, who keeps his mind unstained, not refusing the harmless joys of youth, but avoiding everything that would darken them with vulgar or base associations, is effectually safeguarding himself from the dangers

of a loveless and faithless age. He will not in the future have to turn away with bitter repentance from many good things which he has rendered evil or dangerous to himself. To him faith in God and man will not come as a hard and painful lesson, which is almost impossible for him to learn. He may even come to be one of those souls full of hope and courage, "whose strength is as the strength of ten, because their hearts are pure," and who breathe into others their own fortitude and assurance of victory.

It was said of a great leader of men that "in the darkest perils of war, in the high places of the field, hope shone in him like a pillar of fire when it had gone out in all the others." And something like this might be said of all who have done great things for mankind. They have, as Dante says of himself, been the most hopeful sons of the Church militant. They have hoped for men, because they have had faith in them; and they have had faith in them because they could see in them what was hid from ordinary observation—even from the observation of the men themselves. As the brave man by his courage makes all men around him courageous, swallowing up all their doubts and fears in the greatness of his heart, not because he does not see the danger, but because he sees through and beyond

it—so the man who has kept his eyes clear to discern the possibilities of good in others, is able, as it were by the natural attraction of his confidence, to overcome and expel from their breasts the grudging, doubtful, and suspicious spirit which keeps them weak and divided, because it keeps them at their lowest. It is thus the pure in heart can rise to that highest kind of faith to which all things are possible.

At no time was there greater need for such faith than in our day, when the hearts of men are so full of despondency and doubt. Some of you will remember how Matthew Arnold, in the lines which he devotes to his father's memory, speaks of the power which such men have to strengthen the weaker hearts of others. First he speaks of the tendency of men to get discouraged and incapable of any high effort :

“See ! in the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending?—A God
Marshall'd them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long !
Years they have been in the wild !
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe ;
Factions divide them, their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.

—Ah keep, keep them combined !
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive .
Sole they shall stray ; in the rocks
Stagger for ever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.”

Then he speaks of the way in which men of
high courage and pure and generous hearts
awake hope and faith in others :

“Then in such hour of need,
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardour divine !
Beacons of hope, ye appear !
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van ! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn.
Praise, re-inspire the brave !
Order, courage, return.
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as you go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.”

COURAGE.

“Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God.”

2 SAM. x. 12.

“They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

ISA. ii. 4.

It is remarkable that the same Hebrew nation which produced the most fervid expressions of national patriotism, as justifying and even giving the highest moral glory to war, should also be the source of the prophecy that national division and conflict are things destined to pass away; nay, that from it should have come that Gospel of peace, which can never be fully realised until war shall cease to the ends of the world. This coincidence suggests to us the idea that, while every Christian must regard war as one of the greatest of calamities, yet there are faculties of human nature of the greatest moral value, which have been drawn out and manifested primarily in war, which form a kind of compensation for its evils, and without the maintenance of which peace could not be an unmixed blessing. And at this moment, when the nation is still bleeding from the effects of a great struggle, and we are hoping, with more or less confidence, that it may lead to greater security and peace for the future, it may be worth while to attempt to rise above

all immediate questions of the day, and to ask ourselves what are the good qualities that find exercise in war and in what sense it is true that, even should war be brought to an end, the virtues of the soldier must still hold a place in the highest moral ideal of Christianity.

The great improvements in the means of communication, which have enabled the nation for the last year almost to live upon the battle-fields on which its soldiers were contending, has made us realise in a new way both the evils of war and the spirit that often rises to meet and overcome them. We can realise with a new intensity the frightful sufferings and wrongs which it inevitably brings in its train, the desolation which it spreads among the victors as among the vanquished, the waste of resources that must be made up for by the labour of years, the still greater waste of valuable lives, the loss of which leaves life-long sorrows behind it in many hearts. Yet we can appreciate also the good that goes with this evil, and especially how it has often been the opportunity for the manifestation of some of the most beautiful, if not the highest, qualities of which humanity is capable. If it has let loose the fiercest passions and given occasion to horrors that are unspeakable, it has also raised individuals to deeds of self-forgetful heroism

without the record of which humanity would be poorer. So many, indeed, of the brightest pages of human history are associated with war that to blot them out would be to lower the moral temperature of life. War has often shown how low man can sink, but it has also shown to what height he can rise: and it has shown it the more convincingly that it has drawn acts of surpassing nobleness, not only from a few selected spirits, not only from men of high education or special moral advantages, but, so to speak, from the rudest and commonest clay of which human beings are made. It has revealed to us how near the highest is to every human spirit, if in the ordinary round of life we could only see it as clearly as often it has been manifested in the high-strung moment of battle.

Let me in illustration take one slight incident which I find quoted from the account of Sir Charles Napier's war against the robber tribes of Northern Scinde: "A detachment of troops was marching along a valley, the cliffs overhanging which were crested by the enemy. A sergeant with eleven men chanced to become separated from the rest by taking the wrong side of a ravine, which they expected soon to terminate, but which suddenly deepened into an impassable chasm. The officer in command

signalled to the party an order to return. They mistook the signal for a command to charge; the brave fellows answered with a cheer and charged. At the summit of the steep mountain was a triangular platform, defended by a breast-work, behind which were seventy of the foe. On they went, charging up one of these fearful paths, eleven against seventy. The contest could not long be doubtful with such odds. One after another they fell: six upon the spot, the remainder hurled backwards: but not till they had slain nearly twice their own number.

"There is a custom, we are told, amongst the hillmen that, when a great chieftain of their own falls in battle, his wrist is bound with a thread of red or green, the red denoting the highest rank. According to custom they stripped the dead, and threw their bodies over the precipice. When their comrades came up, they found their corpses stark and gashed; but round the wrist of every British soldier was twined the red thread of honour!"

This story is remarkable in two ways: as it shows, on the one side, how the discipline and excitement of war raises men above themselves, and, on the other side, how prompt even the rudest minds are to recognise such a lifting of the spirit above danger and death, even when it

is displayed against themselves. It is as if for the moment they felt that the great interest of mankind is that noble things should be done, and that it matters little by whom or at whose cost they are done. The impulsive throb of sympathy which such deeds awaken is the proof how directly they express and call out what is best in us.

As it is the dangers of war that give opportunity for the most obvious and unmistakable manifestation of such qualities, so when the highest tribute is paid to human excellence there is a tendency to employ metaphors derived from war. This is true even of the Bible. In regard to the Old Testament, indeed, we might explain this by saying that Judaism was still a national religion—a religion which, while it raised the Jews to a high consciousness of those privileges of their national life which were bound up so closely with their relation to the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, yet was combined with a sense of antagonism to other nations who worshipped other gods. We do not wonder that the militant piety of such a people should find utterance in words like those of the Psalmist: "Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." But it is more remarkable that the

religion of love also so often borrows its expression from the field of battle. Even the aged Apostle when he looks back upon his life of labour and sacrifice for Christ can find no better words to express his consciousness that his work has been accomplished than these: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

If we turn from the Scriptures to the poetic literature in which all nations have expressed their first consciousness of the ideal element in life, we find that exaltation of heroism in battle forms one of its two most prominent themes. Poetry always seeks for its object in something that has an ideal meaning, something that shows an elevation of man's spirit above his merely physical existence; still it seeks this, not by breaking away from that existence, but rather by casting a new light upon it. If it tends to liberate man's soul from the contracted cares and fears of his natural life, it is not by setting the higher against the lower, the spirit against the flesh, but rather by lifting the latter so far as may be to the level of the former. Poetry seeks to turn the common bread of life into sacramental food, and its water into wine. Hence it attaches itself most often to those first and simplest manifestations of man's social and indi-

vidual nature in which he shows that he is something higher than an animal: it attaches itself to the love which is the natural root of all the affections of the family, and the first expression of that capacity of living for others, of which the highest Christian charity is but the purified and extended manifestation; and it attaches itself in like manner to the valour of the soldier, which, as it rises above mere animal rage and deliberately faces and overcomes the fear of death—especially if it does so not merely in defence of the honour of the individual, but of some wider interest of family or nation—seems to give evidence of a nature that is above time and change. Hence it is that the simple tale of love and battle has such undying interest for us, and seems to encircle it with a halo of imagination and romance which is seldom associated with higher and less equivocal manifestations of man's moral nature. It is as if the earliest throb of the higher life in us had in its spontaneity a kind of attractiveness which is wanting to its later, more deliberate and self-conscious manifestations.

This, of course, does not mean that in these primitive forms of man's higher life there is not much that is crude and imperfect. It does not mean that the great division

between flesh and spirit is already overcome in the natural affections of family and kindred, and in the readiness of the members of such societies to fight and die in their service. We must not forget that these are but the beginnings of the spiritual life of man, and that a less exclusive love and a higher kind of courage must take their place, if man is to rise much above his natural self. The beauty of the early blossom must decay, if the fruit of life is to ripen. Still, no good will come of our forgetting that in these natural impulses we have already the beginning of that idealising and purifying of man's nature, that turning of passion into duty and duty into passion, through which alone he can be permanently raised above it, and freed from the rule of self-will and selfishness.

We can trace through many stages the growth of the higher idea of courage. Perhaps the earliest form in which it contains something of a moral character is to be found in that crude sense of personal honour which we find among some savage tribes, where the warrior esteems himself according to the prowess he has shown in the slaying of enemies, and the firmness with which he can bear even the extremity of torture without confessing himself vanquished. Even in this rude form of fortitude there is, as

I have said, something of a moral character, in as much as it shows that man does not live by bread alone. And the fact that such fortitude is generally shown in behalf of the clan or tribe to which the warrior belongs, raises it somewhat above a mere selfish regard to individual glory. At a later date we find this element more and more strongly emphasised, as civilisation advances and barbarous tribes begin to be consolidated into distinct nations with settled government. The citizen soldiers of Greece have perhaps given us the purest types of such heroism in their defence of the earliest type of free, self-governing communities against the hosts of despotic Persia; and we can still feel with keen sympathy what a powerful appeal Demosthenes made to his fellow-countrymen, when he swore by the memory of those who fought at Marathon and Plataea and Salamis, that, in spite of the disaster of Chaeronea, the Athenians did well in opposing the power which threatened the liberty of Greece. Great, however, as has been the contribution to the world's record of patriotic heroism made by Greece, its influence, at least in Protestant countries, has been much exceeded by the type of national self-devotion presented to us in the Old Testament. In this type the consciousness of nationality was from the

beginning bound up with religion. The history of Israel exhibits to us a horde of kindred tribes gradually welded together, by common efforts and sufferings and by the religious inspiration of its prophets, into a nation under one national king. This, its religion in its first stage, was mainly a religion of warriors, the worship of a Lord of Hosts who went forth with their armies, and who rewarded faithful service with victory. And, while in Greece religion seemed to follow political development and to consecrate it, in Israel religion comes first, and, as it were, lifts up a standard around which the people rallies against its enemies. And though the prophets gradually softened and widened the spirit of this faith, yet in all the religion of the Old Testament there is something strenuous and militant, a tone as of martial music mingled with the highest expressions of piety. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. Blessed be the Lord who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." Such verses have the authentic ring of a spirit in which religion and patriotism are different names for

the same thing ; and we do not wonder that they should so often have given courage and inspiration to those who, like our Puritans, were contending for their national life. But they have a certain element of antagonism and exclusiveness, which must be banished from the creed of those who believe that God cannot be on the side of one nation as against another. It was the distinction of Christianity that it set aside such exclusive nationalism and broke down the walls of division that had been built up by racial prejudice between Jew and Gentile, between Greek and barbarian. Christianity enabled the claim of humanity to subordinate to itself all special claims of kindred and nation. And, indeed, as the coming of a new truth is apt at first to lead to a neglect of old ones, it even for a time not only subordinated, but almost extinguished all other claims. And with this it introduced mankind to a new kind of courage, the courage which is shown, not in resisting or gaining the victory over enemies, but in a love that refused to count any man an enemy, and that sought to conquer by patient endurance of every wrong, and even of death itself. For this new spirit the highest honour possible to man was not the prize of victory in battle, but the crown of martyrdom. This type of fortitude

was, for a time, so exclusively honoured that by many Christians the life of a soldier, even of one who fought for the best of causes, was regarded as profane and unholy. "How," asks Tertullian, "shall Christians go to war whom Christ has disarmed? In taking the sword from St. Peter, Christ has disarmed all soldiers."

Like Tolstoi in modern times, Tertullian held that evil must not be resisted, but simply endured by the Christian, who should seek to conquer only by enduring it. In fact, the ascetic and monastic view of Christian perfection, as involving absolute separation from all special relations of life, whether political or domestic, and reducing the bonds of man to man to the simple religious bond of their common relation to God through Christ, naturally went along with such an absolute proscription of all rivalry or antagonism between men, whether as individuals or as societies. But already in the Middle Ages a change of opinion took place, and side by side with the monastic type another type of moral excellence, a type that could be realised by those who lived in the world and entered into all its ordinary relations, began to claim a share of honour. The rude times when every man was liable to be called upon to defend himself and those dearest to him from outrage often called for the virtues of the

soldier ; and among the feudal nobility, the leaders around whom the rising forces of civilisation gathered themselves, there arose the ideal of chivalry, which soon became the theme of a new poetry. In this ideal the rude code of honour of warlike barbarians was, mainly by the influence of Christianity, combined with a new sense of the nobility of service and of the claims of the weak upon the strong. This was, as I have said, a new conception of moral excellence. It has contributed the best part to our modern ideas of the qualities that go to the making of a gentleman. A great poet of our own day spent much of his life in the endeavour to give the last touch of idealism to the picture of the true knights, without fear or reproach, who swore to King Arthur

“To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To honour his own word as if his God’s,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,”

and whose highest ambition was to end their days by falling

“Against the heathen of the northern sea
In battle, fighting for the blameless king.”

What is even more noticeable is that in this

instance the world converted the Church, which already in the later Middle Ages in great part accepted the new ideal of life, and in the Crusades consecrated the virtues of the soldier by devoting them to a cause which all Christendom for the time regarded as its highest interest. Since that time the same process has gone on. For, though feudal institutions passed away and the conception of the knight errant became ridiculous even in a changed world, a separate political life soon grew up in the different nations which had formerly been confused in the great unity of Christendom, and this soon brought back with it the old Greek feeling, or something like the old Greek feeling, of civic patriotism and the honour paid to the citizen soldier. For as these national states became organised, it was inevitable that their interests should come into collision, and that the duty of the citizen to his state should often involve the call to fight for its rights and interests. Thus the individual had to find some way of reconciling his obligations to all men with his special duty to the nation. Or, to put it in another way, he had to combine the heroic patriotism of the Old Testament, for which the cause of the nation was the cause of God, with that enthusiasm of humanity which in its earliest form had refused to see anything

in men but creatures for whom Christ had died, "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free"

Now the question arises whether this is a mere compromise between two principles which cannot be reconciled. A great writer of the present day, Tolstoi, maintains that it is, and would have us go back to what he considers the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount, namely, absolute non-resistance of injury, a morality of absolute self-renunciation both for individuals and nations, and, as I understand him, the surrender of the whole organisation of justice and of all political and national life and the adoption of universal philanthropy as the only rule of action. Tolstoi considers that modern nations have practically renounced Christianity in substituting the idea of right for the idea of duty; and that the whole organisation of our life, in so far as it admits of competition or conflict between men and nations, and in so far as it leaves any room for exclusive national patriotism, is on a heathen basis, and must end in a collapse, similar to that which overtook the ancient world, and from which Christianity for a time saved it. But although this may seem to be true to the letter of some parts of the Sermon on the Mount, it would, I think, be

unfaithful to its spirit. Christ, indeed, sought to break down all divisions between men, or to make them secondary to their unity; but the worst of all these divisions is the division between the Church and the world, which must arise when any element of human nature is regarded as common or unclean. In this sense we may say that Christ died upon the Cross to assert the principle that there is no passion or affection within us which may not be purified and turned into a vehicle of the divine life; no natural relation of men, domestic or national, which may not be filled with the divine spirit. It was natural that the early church should think mainly of the new tie of brotherhood which it was seeking to establish among men, and should let all other narrower bonds or relationships fall into the background. And it was equally natural that it should give special prominence to the new ideas of self-sacrifice, patience, endurance of wrong, and should even exalt the martyr's crown as the only true manifestation of courage. But if this were the whole lesson of Christianity, it would not have healed the divisions of the ancient world or reconciled man with God, the human with the divine.

The real lesson of Christianity, as the modern world is gradually learning to read it, is more

complex. Humanity does not return upon its past, and the new time has brought with it new moral demands. We cannot go back upon the fierce national patriotism of an earlier time, which made the nation an absolute end to which everything must be sacrificed and regarded other peoples as the enemies of God. But neither can we go back upon the undistinguishing charity of the early church, that paid almost no regard to the differences of individuals, families, and nations, or to the minor charities in which human love must realise itself, if it is really to penetrate all parts of our life. The personal ties of the family and the great historical structure of the national state are the necessary forms of our moral existence, which must be defended even with the sacrifice of life itself; and yet we must recognise that both family and nation are subordinate to humanity, or rather that all nations are members of one great family of men, whose progress and improvement is the highest of all interests. We must, therefore, look forward to a time in which all nations shall again be united in a new empire of peace, more comprehensive even than was the empire of Rome; and we must as Christians set this before us as the ultimate end of all our social and political action. But the end when it comes must be achieved, not as in the

Roman empire by a common slavery, but by a common freedom. At present we have but the beginnings of this better empire of peace in the growing multitude of interests by which the nations are united, in the efforts at mediation by other powers between discordant states, in the limitation of the horrors of war by generally accepted rules, in the good treatment of the wounded belonging to the enemy, for which the present war has been happily distinguished on both sides. The world, for good or ill, is being drawn together so that nothing that affects one nation can leave the others indifferent. And though the superficial effect of this has been rather to bring into prominence the feelings of antagonism that divide us from each other, in the long run it is making us, and must more and more make us, feel that the differences of men, great and important as they are in one point of view, are superficial in comparison with the deeper basis of sympathy between them.

This is not the place to discuss the causes or the results of the present war, but I may venture to point out some general lessons which it has brought home to us, in a way in which perhaps we never realised them before. It has brought home to our hearts how much, as members of a nation, we depend on each other, how deep is

the kindred spirit that, in spite of our many divisions of class and interest and opinion, makes us feel as one man in the face of danger and disaster. A nation lives when its sons are ready to die for it—that is what patriotism means. And though few of us may be called to give this last proof of loyalty, we may be sure that in one form or other the same kind of demand will be made upon us for readiness to prefer the interests of our country to our own, and that the future welfare of the nation will depend upon our being able to meet the test.

On the other hand, the high measure of courage and self-sacrifice displayed on the enemy's side as well as on our own should make us feel, in a deeper way, what was felt even by the robber tribes of Scinde towards the British soldiers,—that the highest qualities of man are not the property of any nation. It should make us feel that there is no room for that blatant spirit of national glory that bids us exalt ourselves above other peoples. Nay, it must make us feel that the rightfulness of this and of all wars must finally be judged from the point of view of humanity, and that the value of victory must be estimated by its being for the ultimate good of the vanquished as well as of the victors. And it is for each of us in the future, so far as in us

lies, to make it so. There is no harm, rather there is the greatest good, in our being full of zeal for the imperial glory of England, if and so far as that glory is the glory of greater service, the glory of raising barbarous races to civilisation and Christianity, the glory of extending the empire of peace and justice among men. But if we get to think,—as we too often have seemed to think,—merely of selfish triumph, of commercial success and material aggrandisement and military glory, we shall soon find that we have mistaken the way even to *such* national prosperity. For, if there is one thing that history proves, it is that Christ pointed out the true foundation of human greatness when He said: "He that would be greatest among you, let him be your servant." Our empire is given us for the greater service of man, and it will depart from us when its existence ceases to contribute to that end.

A last lesson, closely connected with the other two, which may be gathered from this war is that the new time seems to demand a somewhat different and perhaps higher kind of courage than was needed in former days. This lesson immediately relates to the life of the soldier, but is not confined in its application to that life. It has been shown that, under the new conditions of warfare, there is a demand for greater know-

ledge and thoughtfulness, for greater power of independent initiative on the part both of the officers and of the soldiers generally. The days are gone by when all that was needed for success, at least on the part of everyone but the chief commander, was unintelligent audacity aided by mechanical discipline. It is now required that an army should be not merely a machine in the hands of one or a few experts, but a living organism which is full of energy and intelligence in every part of it. And this, of course, means the need of a higher intellectual and moral training, in addition to the mechanical drill which was formerly thought sufficient. But the same demand is made upon us in other departments, not only for war, but also for peace; not only in the army, but in the civil service of the country, in the professions and even in trade. For the greater complexity of modern life tends everywhere to weaken the power of mere routine, to increase the responsibilities of individuals and the need for knowledge, practical wisdom and a higher kind of moral courage. And the need for this is even greater in peace than in war. For, after all, the duties of the soldier are comparatively simple, and he is saved from many of the difficulties as to the line of duty, and from many of the temptations to swerve from it that beset

other men. And if great skill and judgment is required of him, he at least always knows the objects he has to realise with a distinctness and certainty not always attainable in other fields of action. Hence there are trials of courage which come to us all, and which are more difficult to meet than those of war. For one who would shrink from the dangers of battle, there are many who would not care to maintain a cause or opinion which was unpopular among their own class, or to express disapproval of acts they know to be wrong, but which are commended or allowed by their immediate associates. How many were there in a former generation who fought duels simply because they had not the courage to risk being called cowards? And how many are there now who give way to coarse habits of speech or acts of degrading intemperance, because they want the courage to stand up against the example of companions, or fear to be thought hypocritical or pretentious. Cowardice is the source of half the petty faults that go gradually to weaken the character and render life futile. On the other hand, to be true to ourselves, to refuse base compliances with evil, to follow the light within us wherever it leads, without fear or hesitation, often requires far more genuine courage than is needed to run the greatest risks

to life and limb. And on men like most of you who are studying here, who are destined to occupy posts of responsibility in the public service or the professions, the demand for this kind of courage is perhaps greater than it ever was before. The risks of battle can come to very few of us, the risk of literal martyrdom for our convictions comes practically to none in the modern world; but the need for the soldier and martyr spirit, the need for men who will keep their loins girt and their lamps burning through all the confusion and difficulty of life, is still with us. And to you who have the advantages of this happy university life which is given to so few,—this breathing time before the battle, this time to train your powers and prepare yourselves for various spheres of duty which are of the highest importance to your country,—the demand comes with special force. “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”

Courage in its lowest form is a thing mainly of temperament and nervous energy; in a somewhat higher form it is a matter of discipline and *esprit de corps*; but if we ask what is the secret of the highest kind of it, of that moral courage which has often lifted weak men and weaker women above all the calculations of

expediency, above all the hopes and fears of mortal life, the answer must be that the great source of courage is faith—by which, of course, is meant, not faith in doctrines, but faith in God; in other words, some form of that belief in the omnipotence of good which is the basis of true religion. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Some measure of this faith always goes with all genuine moral effort, and when it is strong, it makes such effort invincible. This is, we may say, the source of almost every great deed which has raised the level of human life. “Time would fail me,” says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “to tell of those who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” A great modern philosopher sought to gather up the true ethical spirit in the words, “I can because I ought.” It must be possible because it is right.

“So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man.
When duty whispers low: ‘Thou must,’
The youth replies: ‘I can.’”

“Impossible,” says Shakespeare, “be strange attempts to those that weigh their pains in sense,” that is, to those who will venture nothing because they cannot see what good it will do, cannot see on principles of calculation what will be gained for themselves or others by some act which they know to be right. In the confusion of the battle of life, the soldier cannot calculate the gain of his own effort, but must go upon the bare faith that the general has not placed him where he is without a purpose. And those who believe that Christ spoke the truth when He said that God is the Father of men, that the almighty power is an all-embracing love,—a belief which, I think, our best philosophy tends to support,—should above all others be sure that, however it may appear for the moment, the stars in their courses are fighting against evil, and the whole powers of the universe are on his side who is working in the service of God or, what is the same thing, working for the good of his fellowmen. He who has such a faith should be able to meet all the difficulties of life with the feeling of victory in his heart, however strong may seem the forces of evil within and without him. He can respond to the inspiring battle-cry of the great Apostle who, above all, carried the

spirit of the true soldier into the service of the gospel of peace. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to *stand*."

IMMORTALITY

“THE world passeth away and the lust thereof: but
he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

1 JOHN ii. 17.

Balliol Hall, October 15, 1905

ONE of the strongest motives for religion seems to be the need for finding something abiding amid the shifting scene of earthly life, in which everything within and without us is continually changing and passing away ; in which we are ever learning by experience that the persons and things which make up the interest of our lives are no secure possessions, and even finding when we turn our eyes upon ourselves that we too are continually losing our former desires and interests, almost our very selves, and becoming changed with the changing world. The sense of instability thus produced, and the consciousness that at best all things are hasting for us to an inevitable end, is what gives its most tragic significance to our existence, and ultimately forces us, however little inclined to reflexion, to face the inevitable question, What is the meaning and value of a life that is so transitory ? The thought of death, indeed, is not often a directly operative influence upon our minds, at least so long as the vital energy of our powers and impulses is

fully maintained : but after the earliest years, everyone begins to have in the background of his consciousness a lurking sense of the insecurity of life, and of everything included in its interests ; and no one can live for more than a few years, without having this sense deepened in him, by the disappearance of friends, intercourse with whom had seemed almost an essential part of his being, by the disappointment of hopes that appeared most securely based, by changes in his circumstances or in himself which he had no reason to anticipate. It is not natural for the young to dwell upon the idea of death, nor is it desirable that they should. And perhaps for most of us even in maturer years it is well to remember the words of Spinoza, that there is nothing the wise man thinks of less than death—his continual contemplation is not of death, but of life. Still it is well for us all sometimes to consider how the fact of death modifies our view of life, and what reasons there are for our looking upon it not as an end of all our hopes and interests, but as only one step in the history of our spiritual life. We have the further reason for such consideration, that it is most often with the passing away of kindred or friends who were dear to us that our earliest religious impressions are connected ; the instability of the things and persons

nearest to us, naturally awakes the consciousness of our need for something enduring, something on which we can rely, and on which we can build our lives. It is because they can find no stable footing on what Shakespeare calls "this bank and shoal of time," that men are driven beyond it to seek for the Eternal. Looking at it in this way, we might characterise the different religions as different ways in which men have viewed the fact of change and death, and have sought either to evade it, to console themselves for it, to harden themselves against it, or to triumph over it in the thought of that which change and death cannot touch.

It is rather the first of these courses, the evasion of the thought of death, which is exemplified in early religion, as represented, for instance, by Homer. He seems to express the natural and instinctive shrinking from the grave, as the limit to all the positive interests of life. Death is for him a catastrophe beyond which, if there is a continuance of existence, it is in a state from which all the energy and joy of human life has departed, and no interest is left but the memory of the past. The well-known words of Achilles give expression to this phase of belief: "I would rather be living on the earth as a poverty-stricken peasant, than be ruler over

all the myriads of the dead." Such a view might not necessarily lead men to adopt the maxim of Epicurean despair, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"; but it would certainly tend to make them regard the immediate present as their only real interest. The view of the early Hebrews seems to have been almost equally hopeless as to the future; but the Psalmist combines with it a nobler conception of the present, when he pleads for a prolongation of life in such terms as these: "Deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake; for in death there is no remembrance of thee, in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Life to him is not an opportunity for enjoyment, but for the worship and service of God. And, indeed, if a man were convinced that this life is all, it would still be the only worthy course for him to try to leave this transitory world the better for his presence in it, and to live in the spirit of the precept, "Work while it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work." At the same time it is hardly possible for man to maintain for long such an attitude of mind, and to give the whole moral energy of his soul to his earthly work, without having the belief or hope that by his effort he is contributing to something more lasting than his own transitory earthly

existence, and that there is in his unstable life an element which death cannot affect, but which has in it the pledge of immortality, the seed of a life which reaches beyond time, and is not limited by the transitoriness of the forms through which it realises itself here. In Israel this belief was closely attached to the idea of the limitless future of the race of Abraham, with which the individual Israelite could so identify himself as to find in it a greater self, in which he should survive, when individually he had passed away.

But the development of Jewish religion did not stop at this point, and in later times the hope of the future began to take a more personal form. As men became more reflective, the claims of the individual were more distinctly emphasized, and they could not feel satisfied with a solution of the riddle of life that had no relation to their own individual consciousness, and in which they could not personally partake. The book of Job gives a vivid picture of the moral influences which gave rise to this new belief. Job feels keenly the perplexities of his own life, and that of men in general; and his belief in God, which he cannot give up, compels him to think and to assert not only that justice will be ultimately realised, but also that he himself will see it realised in his own case. A clear manifestation

of God's justice and goodness must come—such is the instant demand of his moral consciousness—and it must come to the man himself. For somewhere, somewhen, if there be a God, justice must be realised, and must be experienced by the human spirit in which God has implanted the demand for it. From this time, therefore, the belief in a future existence of the individual, in which all the mysteries of this life would be cleared up, began to form an essential part of the religion of the Jews. And the permanent basis on which man's faith could rest, amid all the changes of this passing world, was henceforth regarded as consisting in a divine moral purpose, which is imperfectly realising itself here, but which is destined to be perfectly realised in another life. To that purpose, the individual man could devote himself, and by so doing could lift himself beyond the power of death and change. In the text we have a striking expression of this way of thinking. The writer does not shut his eyes to the fact of the transitoriness of this earthly life and all that belongs to it: "The world passeth away and the lust thereof." All the immediate objects of our desires, even the objects of our purest affections, the friends and kindred who seem to be a great part of ourselves, and upon whose fellowship we most often rely,

must sooner or later fail us, and even our desires themselves will gradually lose their first intensity and become dulled by age. But the Apostle takes refuge in the thought that in the moral life we are acting out the will of God, and making ourselves the organs of a purpose that cannot fail of fulfilment; and that those who are the organs of the divine life must partake in its eternity. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Christianity brought with it a new thought to confirm and reinforce such a faith. It called attention to the fact that the highest life of humanity is not merely something which realises itself *in spite of* the transitoriness and mortality of the individual, but that this transitoriness is just the opportunity which is necessary for its realisation. It is in the frailty, the dangers and the failure of the natural life, that the spiritual life finds the means for its development and manifestation. It is in meeting the risks and sufferings of a transitory life that the noblest features of character, courage, patience, and the power of self-sacrifice are exercised and matured. And, on the other hand, it is the fact that we are individually weak that throws us most upon each other, and gives occasion for the growth of the great charities that bind men

together in social bonds, so that they become ready to live, and not seldom even to die for each other. In this way it is the instability of our earthly existence that affords the main opportunity for the building up of a strong and noble character. Hence Christ laid down a principle of far-reaching application when He declared that he who would save his life must be willing to lose it. In other words, it is just in rising above the impulse to maintain and aggrandise the natural life, and even in the supreme sacrifice of it, that the spirit of man shows its unextinguishable vitality. In support of this faith, Christianity can appeal to the fact that almost all the great deeds to which the memory of humanity clings, as the highest achievements of the race, and the most convincing manifestations of its spiritual and moral energies, are just those that have involved a sacrifice of the life of the agent. In other words, the greatest manifestations of man's spiritual life, have been connected with his natural death. Thus the courage of the soldier who goes to face certain death for his country, often has made the very act of dying the highest revelation of the moral force of the life which dwelt in him. The devotion of the martyr who was ready to sacrifice all his dearest aims and earthly

interests, even existence itself, to the truth in which he found a higher self, has turned his fate from a mere passive suffering to the very highest of all the acts of his life. In all such cases, death becomes not a mere concomitant of the higher life, but the means through which it is realised. And it is difficult to suppose that that which is the essential means to the development and manifestation of spiritual life in man should be inimical, or even fatal to it. Plato uses it as an argument for the immortality of the soul, that the diseases and ills of the body do not often affect its intellectual and moral energies. It is in any case a better argument that these ills, and death itself, are so often made the very opportunity for the manifestation of such energy in its highest form. At least we may find in this fact some confirmation of the thought of St. Paul, that as the spiritual involves a continual dying to the natural life, so natural death is not to be regarded as the end of all existence, but rather as the supreme occasion for the manifestation of that higher life which death cannot touch.

The thought that in this point of view, death and change are not to be regarded as evils, but rather as blessings in our lot, has found a beautiful expression in an unfinished novel of

Hawthorne's, the plot of which turns upon the subject of the old search for an *elixir vita*, which should exempt man from the necessity of dying. In this novel Hawthorne tries to show by the course of the story, and also, in a passage which I am about to read,* from the mouth of one of the characters, that the mere prolongation of man's existence upon earth, and his exemption from the risks to which it is now subjected, would be the greatest of calamities for his moral life.

“What a blessing to mortals, what a kindness of Providence that life is made so uncertain ; that death is thrown in among the possibilities of our being ; that these awful mysteries are here around us, into which we may vanish. For without it, how would it be possible to be heroic, how should we plod along in commonplaces for ever, never risking anything ? For my part I think that men are more favoured than the angels, and made capable of greater heroism, greater virtue, and a more excellent spirit than they, because we have such a mystery of grief and terror around us ; whereas they, being in the certainty of God's light, seeing his goodness and his purposes more perfectly, cannot be so brave as poor weak man and weaker woman have the opportunity of being, and sometimes make use

of it. God gave the whole world to man, and if he is left alone with it, it will make a clod of him at last; but to remedy that, God gave man a grave, and it redresses all, and makes an immortal spirit of him in the end." Now I think that these words express in a striking way the idea which we have been considering, which seems to be essential to Christianity, the idea, namely, that for the spiritual well-being of man it would not be desirable that his natural life should be secured from change and death, but that they are an essential part of his education as a spiritual being. Looking at it in this way, we should not wish to escape these necessities of the life of nature, even if it were possible. And St. Paul merely carries out this view to its natural consequences by his teaching that the development of the higher life in man is based upon the subordination and surrender of the lower life, and that it is the essential meaning of Christ's life and death that every one must die to himself in order to rise to the wider life of Christian love. Natural death, therefore, in the view of St. Paul, is merely the ending of man's natural existence; but it has no power over his spiritual life, which springs from a deeper principle in his being—a principle which cannot be destroyed by the failure of the first form of existence under

which it manifests itself here in this world, but which, on the contrary, can find food for its own development in that very failure; so that "though our outward man perish yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

Now we are not, I think; to regard this language of St. Paul merely as the language of revelation, which is to be accepted, if at all, simply on authority. We should ask ourselves whether it is not also the most rational interpretation of the facts of human life as they present themselves in our experience. No one can indeed expect to find direct empirical evidence for or against the hypothesis of another life; but the question is whether it is the true interpretation of our life here, looking to the general constitution of the world and the relations of the spiritual and the natural in it.

Now, there can be no doubt that the first superficial aspect of things seems to be against it. The facts of change, decay, and death are obviously universal. And it has even been asserted by some that the only things that point in the opposite direction are a few obscure analogies, such as those suggested by the continual return of plant and animal life in every new generation; and in these cases it is pointed out that it is not the individual which returns, but only new specimens

of the same genus. So, in like manner, in human life we have a continual recurrence of types or new manifestations of the same principles. The best things in humanity, truth and goodness, may constantly reappear in fresh and sometimes in higher forms; but the identity, it is said, is merely generic, and not the persistence or return of the same individual life. And, it is argued, if this is all that can be said, we are left without any distinct evidence of a future life of the individual except such as may be found in man's natural aversion to the idea of extinction.

I think, however, that this is a very one-sided and narrow view of the subject, a view which leaves out of account the indications in human life itself which seem to authorise us to regard death as a transitional stage in a life that does not find completion in this world. Our ultimate reason for believing anything that goes beyond our immediate sensible experience is that we cannot give a rational account of the facts, cannot conceive them as part of an intelligible order, if it be not true. And on this ground I think that there is strong evidence for man's future existence. I have already suggested some of the aspects of the question that seem important—but one or two others may be referred to. For one thing, it is manifest to discerning students that

the great forces by which the course of the world's history is ultimately governed are moral forces. These forces, however, are very slow in their operation, and they often seem to win their way by the sacrifice of those men who have been their servants and organs. ' These men in any case do not survive to share in the triumph of the causes they have served. But this is a result in which our minds refuse to acquiesce as final. In our moral consciousness, as in that of Job, there is the demand for a perfect manifestation of justice and goodness, and for its manifestation to *ourselves*. Kant carries our moral judgment with him when he declares that there is nothing in the world, and nothing that we can think of out of it, which we can regard as absolutely good, except a good will ; nor does it seem possible to believe that in a universe in which no particle of matter is ever lost, such a great and beneficent force as exists in a human being of pure and righteous character can perish with the failure of his bodily powers. I think that every one who has known intimately a great and good man, feels death in his case to be almost incredible, if by death be meant an end of being. If the world is a rational, and therefore a moral system, it cannot be that this, the most precious thing we know, the only absolutely precious thing in

the world, a character built up and matured in goodness through all the trials of life, should pass away and be lost for ever.

We may get a partial confirmation of this from the effect which is produced on us by the great tragic poets; for it is this secret consciousness of the essential permanence and vitality of that which is best that explains the feeling of reconciliation with which we contemplate the greatest tragedies of human life, when they are presented to us by a poet who makes us perceive clearly the mighty spiritual powers that are manifested in the conflict out of which the tragic result comes. It is not merely that the great dramatist makes us trace a moral necessity in the catastrophe. It is also that he makes us feel that the catastrophe cannot be final. "Sometimes," says Professor Bradley in his profound book on Shakespeare, "sometimes, out of the furnace of affliction, in a great tragedy like *King Lear*, a conviction seems to be borne to us that somehow, if we could see it, the agony counts as nothing against the heroism and love that appear in it and thrill our hearts. Sometimes, we are driven to cry out that these mighty or heavenly spirits are too great for the little space in which they move, and that they vanish, not into nothingness, but into freedom. Sometimes from these and from other sources comes

a presentiment, formless, but haunting and even profound, that all the fury of the conflict, with its waste and woe, is less than half the truth, and that the tragic world is but a fragment of the greater whole which lies beyond our vision."

Now, if this is a true analysis of the effect of the greatest tragic poetry, its power seems to lie mainly in this, that it makes us feel that there are spiritual forces working in human life, which in human life often lead to ruin and catastrophes, and do not attain the complete realisation they must ultimately reach, and of which they contain the earnest and promise. Yet it seems also to make us feel that it is just through the changes and chances of a fragile finite life, which is lived under the shadow of death, that the opportunity is given for the development and manifestation of these forces. The great tragic poets thus become witnesses to the view of death as a transitional necessity of man's spiritual development, and not by any means as an absolute limit to it. Plato found the evidence of man's immortality in the fact that his mind can grasp truth which is universal and eternal, and that he can live for interests spiritual or moral which are independent of time. The spirit that can grasp truth and love goodness, he argues, must have close kindred with these its objects, and partake

in their eternity. And to some it has seemed that he who has such experiences possesses already the evidence of eternal life in himself. Spinoza even ventures to say that in them we actually have present experience of eternal life: *Scimus et experimur nos æternos esse*. In knowledge and love the eternal already lives in us.

Perhaps, however, most of us may find a stronger evidence in the fact already referred to, that our highest moral life is able not only to resist the influences of weakness and pain and imminent death, but, even as we have seen in the case of many a patient and heroic sufferer, to make these the means of its own development and manifestation, and, as it were, to fill the very shadow of death with the brightness of life eternal. This of itself seems to contain an evidence that there is something in us which these forces cannot destroy—and if it is true, as Hawthorne tries to show, that the transitoriness of our earthly existence is just the necessary means whereby the highest energies of man's spiritual life are drawn forth, we can certainly not found on such transitoriness any argument against the belief in immortality, but rather we have in it a pledge and prophecy that spiritual life itself is not transitory.

It is a similar vein of thought on which we

find Tennyson dwelling in his *In Memoriam*, where he contends that if man is a being who has no future beyond this life, his whole life and being are in discord with themselves and unintelligible.

In a rational system of things, we cannot conceive that *such* a nature should be combined with *such* a fate. "Shall man," nature's last and highest work, he asks:

"Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,
.
Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?"

Nothing, the poet declares, could be more incongruous, or unintelligible: "No more? A monster then, a dream, a discord." Tennyson therefore appears to find his strongest basis of faith just in the thought that man's existence would be irrational and meaningless, if he has no future beyond this world. In short, his ultimate reason is that the whole system of things of which man is the highest part, can be made coherent with itself and intelligible only on the view that his

earthly life is a part of a greater whole. Thus he maintains that this is the only view that is consistent with the conviction that the universe is a rational, and therefore a moral system; or what is the same thing, with the existence of a God who governs the world. Now this means that we should believe in a future life because we have good ground to believe in God and in goodness as the ultimate principle of all things. Thus the future life of man is a truth which we do not accept for itself, but because it seems to rest upon a deeper truth. Direct proof of immortality cannot be had, or not in a conclusive form, but if we believe in God, immortality seems to follow as a natural, perhaps we should say as a necessary consequence. For if we think of the world as the manifestation of a rational and moral principle—and that it must be so conceived seems to be a necessary presupposition of all our mental and moral life—we must regard it as existing for the realisation of that which is best and highest; and that best and highest we can hardly conceive as anything but the training and development of immortal spirits. The outcome of a world which is the realisation of the Will of God, must be either immortality for beings who are made in his image, or something better—and what better can there be that does not involve immortal life?

This is, I think, the argument by which Christ sought to refute the Sadducees, who maintained that there was no resurrection. He showed that this was inconsistent with the fundamental idea of the Jewish religion as a faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—since “God is not a God of the dead, but of the living.” In other words, the existence of God carries with it the continued existence of those who have lived for His service. They have become the organs and sharers in a life which is beyond the injuries of time. Every merely natural existence must pass away; the world and every product of time is at last devoured by time. But he who has lived for truth and goodness has built upon a rock that will not fail him, *if* there be a God who governs and manifests Himself in the universe. “The world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” He has become a part of the divine life, and he and his work must remain.

THE FAITH OF JOB

“THOUGH he slay me, yet will I trust in him : but
will maintain mine own ways before him.”

JOB xiii. 15.

THESE words in their strange mixture of faith and unfaith, of trust and mistrust, may be taken as summing up the argument of Job in the book called by his name. That book is one of the most remarkable in the Bible, not merely for its great literary qualities, for the imaginative grandeur of its pictures of nature, and the boldness and directness of its expression of the facts of human life, and the emotions they excite in us, but above all for the vivid way in which it brings before us what we may call the great perennial debate between man's soul and God. It describes the struggle between the doubts that beset man as to the existence of any divine justice or goodness, and the faith that sustains him against such doubts, and ultimately enables him to triumph over them.

This book has special reference to a stage in the development of the creed of Israel when the belief in a simple justice of rewards and punishments—the belief that goodness is directly

followed by success and happiness, and ill-doing by failure and misery—began to be shaken by the experience of life. It was observed that the facts of human existence do not support the idea of any such immediate distribution of rewards and punishments, and the minds of men began to be distressed and perplexed by the problem, whether the whole conception of God as a righteous Judge was to be abandoned, or whether, on the other hand, a deeper justice could be discerned in the apparent injustice, and the old faith could be widened and elevated so as to overcome the new difficulties raised against it. And the intensity of the conflict was made greater by the fact that as yet there was no thought of a future life, or at least of a future life that had any joy or energy in it.

The author of the book of Job, whoever he may have been, is not afraid to state the problem in all its difficulty. He makes Job express with startling boldness, at once the demand of the soul for justice, and its disappointment and revolt against the facts of life that seem to run counter to it—the sufferings of the good and the success of the wicked. Nay, he even makes Job treat the attempt to throw a veil over such facts as pure hypocrisy and untruthfulness: “Will ye speak wickedly

for God, and talk deceitfully for him?" The difficulty, he insists, is to be faced in all its greatness. Yet—and this is the characteristic feature of the poem—through all his doubt and distress, through all his suffering and the agony of mind it produces, Job is exhibited as maintaining his faith in God; and in the end his integrity is vindicated by God against those who have denied it merely on the ground of his misfortunes. The aim of the writer, therefore, is to show that there is a point of view from which the difficulties in question may be removed or transcended, that they are not fatal to faith but only trials of it, from which it may emerge purer and stronger than ever. The book, in short, paints for us a transition period when the faith in a direct, retributive justice, which had satisfied the need of an earlier time, was beginning to be felt inadequate; and when those who were too honest to shut their minds to the facts and simply to reassert the old doctrine, were asking how, in the face of them, they could maintain their faith in God and restore their religious life upon a wider basis. It contains, I think, some perennial lessons for those who live in an age of doubt and criticism like our own, and who have almost daily to encounter the absolute assertion and the equally

absolute denial of old beliefs. Every educated man is forced to deal in some way with such difficulties: but the duty of adopting a right attitude toward them, falls especially on those who, by the course of their studies, are obliged to think about the great questions of the nature and destiny of man and his relation to God.

In order to bring out all the aspects of his argument, the difficulty and the solution, the question and the answer, the author of the Book of Job presents it to us in the form of a dramatic story. He draws for us the picture of a Bedouin prince or Sheikh, the wealthy and prosperous head of a great family or tribe, the object of reverence and affection to all his kindred and neighbours, to whom he is the great source of justice, of charity and of counsel in all the affairs of life. He is a "perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil"; and the reward of his goodness flows back to him in continually increasing wealth and honour, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me." "I was a father to the poor." "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." "And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth."

“Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.”

But this life of joyous piety is suddenly interrupted. Satan, the adversary, appears before God and challenges the merit of Job's easy goodness. “Doth Job serve God for naught? Hast not thou made an hedge about him and about all that he hath on every side? But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.” Satan is authorised to make trial of Job's faith and patience by the destruction of his possessions, by the ruin and death of his family, and, finally, by bringing sore disease—apparently the worst kind of leprosy—upon himself. But Job holds out against it all: and when his wife bids him curse God and die, he reproves her, and refuses to let go his faith. “Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?” “The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

But this is not a full account of Job's attitude of mind. He has not ceased to believe in God, but he is in great difficulty about his justice. And when his friends come to sit and mourn with him after the manner of the East, after a long silence, he breaks out into a cry of despair, wishes that he had never been born, and expresses

the utmost amazement that such things should have befallen him. Job's friends answer by bidding him reflect on the sins he must have committed to bring all these evils upon him. Job should ask himself *why* he is punished, and should repent, in the hope that God will restore him. In other words, they urge upon him the simple doctrine that, as all evils are penalties for sin, the individual who suffers ought not only to submit, but to assume that it is right he should be so treated. And when Job protests against this argument, and maintains that there is something inexplicable in his fate, and that, even if he has failings like every mortal man, he has done nothing to justify the peculiar bitterness of his sufferings, they severely reprove him, and lay it upon him as a duty to accept what has befallen him as justice.

Job's view of things is quite different. He will not be what he calls a hypocrite before God, or conform his language to a view of things which he cannot see to be true. He will not say what he does not feel, in conformity to some external standard of what he ought to feel. He sees the impossibility of questioning the Almighty. "How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand." "Whom, though I were right-

eous, yet would I not answer ; but I would make intercession to my judge." But still, in the consciousness of his integrity, he reacts against this feeling of awe, and wishes to lay his case before God himself. "Oh, that I might plead with God as a man pleadeth with his neighbour." "Let him take away his rod from me, and let not his fear terrify me ; then would I speak and not fear him." "I will say unto God : Do not condemn me ; show me wherefore thou contendest with me." "Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked."

These last words also point to another aspect of the subject. Job does not plead for himself alone ; he regards his own case as typical of what is happening in the world generally. He looks around and sees that human life is not organised on the simple principle of rewards and punishments, which his friends bid him acknowledge. He sees the righteous often oppressed and the wicked often flourishing. "From out of the populous city men groan, and the soul of the wounded crieth out : Yet God imputeth it not for folly : " *i.e.* God does not punish the oppressors. "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked : He covereth the faces of the judges thereof ; If it be not he, who then is it ?"

“Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, wax mighty in power? . . . Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.” In short, Job seems to find that moral distinctions do not explain the fortunes of men, and he even suggests that happiness and misery are apportioned indiscriminately. “One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. . . . And another dieth in bitterness of soul, and never tasteth of good. They lie down alike in the dust, and the worm covereth them.” The evils that have come upon Job, therefore, have not merely caused him intense pain: they have, as it were, emptied the earth of God. “Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.” “Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, when he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.”

All this, however, is but one aspect of Job's thought. He is in despair, he cannot find God in the world: yet he holds to his belief in God. And with this there continually rises upon his mind the hope and even the conviction that somehow, somewhere his integrity must be vin-

dedicated. He appeals, as it were, from God to God, from God as manifested in the immediate events of life, to God as the source of justice. "O earth," he exclaims, "cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no resting place. Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he that voucheth for me is on high." As the controversy goes on, the violent words in which at first Job has expressed his despair are withdrawn, and his friends who took them literally are condemned for want of sympathy. "Do ye imagine to reprove words? Seeing that the speeches of one that is desperate are as wind?" As the friends become irritated by his resistance, and therefore more dogmatic in their assertions that he *must* have been guilty above all other men to provoke such judgments, Job seems to grow calmer and stronger in maintaining his integrity, and, in spite of absence of any definite faith in immortality, he at times rises to the belief that even after his death his right will be vindicated, and that his own spirit will see it. "But I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand up at the last upon the earth: And after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

My reins are consumed within me." Somewhere right *must* be triumphant, even if the Gates of Sheol have to be opened for it—because God is just. Job's pleadings culminate in that great speech, beginning with the words: "O that I were as in the months of old, as in the days when God watched over me," in which he first pictures his former happy state, when he enjoyed the favour of God and the blessings of men, then describes the wretched condition to which he has been reduced, and ends with a new protestation of his integrity. "If I have walked with vanity, and my foot hath hastened to deceit; . . . If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, . . . Then let my shoulder fall, from the shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone," and so on. Yet just immediately before this passage, Job has made a strong assertion of his faith in God in the well-known words: "But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? . . . The deep saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me . . . God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof . . . And unto men he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

What, therefore, we find in the utterances of

Job is not an expression of belief or unbelief, but a constant alternation between the fixed faith in God, and the arraignment of his justice as seen in the immediate events of life; and in consequence of both, the insistent cry to God to make His ways clear to His creatures, and to show that their belief in Him as a God of justice is not an illusion. To this argument we may find many parallels in the Psalms, for instance in the 74th Psalm, where we find the writer complaining of the evils of the world, and, as we might express it, expostulating with the divine Being on the darkness of the course of life, and calling upon Him to manifest His justice more clearly. "O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? . . . How long, oh God, shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?" What distinguishes the book of Job is the personal and direct expression which is given to this idea by the very form of the story, and the boldness and even audacity with which the demand for light and justice is enforced.

In the end God is represented as replying to Job out of the whirlwind with a reproof for his want of faith. Job is summoned to reflect on the power and wisdom shown in the great phenomena of nature, and asked whether he refuses

to trust the Being who has produced them all. "Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave to him thy labours? Wilt thou confide in him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather the corn of thy threshing-floor?" Job, in short, is told to look beyond the lot of the individual to the larger scheme of the universe, and to trust that his individual case will not be neglected in the wider movement of the divine will. The sufferings of Job are not final, but are intended, as the general plan of the poem shows us, to test his integrity—the genuineness of his faith in goodness and in God, and the steadfastness of his adherence to both under the pressure of the severest trials. Job bows before the majesty of God and confesses his sin. "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee, Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." But the substantial rectitude of his life and of his attitude toward God is vindicated, his friends are re-proved and punished for their mistaken accusations, and he is restored to all his former prosperity.

There is something, no doubt, that strikes us as inadequate in the conclusion reached at the end of the book of Job—the crude restoration of an equivalent for all he has lost, even for his dead

sons and daughters ; but this probably belongs to the traditional form of the story on the basis of which the tragedy was written. What is essential is the lesson which seems to be inculcated by the book as a whole, that it is possible to separate faith in God from the old doctrine of immediate rewards and punishments. That doctrine is inconsistent with facts, and in the view of the writer, the attempt to maintain it leads to false accusations, and also to hypocrisy, or the pretence of holding to a belief which is no longer credible. Misfortune, he holds, may be the trial of faith ; nor, in spite of the ending of the story, could he, in consistency with the general argument, intend to maintain that that trial would be short, or compensated by a complete restoration of outward prosperity in this world. Rather, I think, he would suggest that in view of the great manifestation of divine power and wisdom in the universe, it is the duty of men to endure to the end, and trust in God that their labours will not be in vain.

How far does this ancient book cast any light upon the difficulties and duties of men in the present day? This age has been called the age of criticism, an age in which every belief and institution inherited from the past is called upon to show its credentials, and in which, at least for

educated men, there is no possibility of evading the duty of examining them, and endeavouring to the best of their ability to distinguish what is accidental and changeable from that which is essential and of permanent value. What, then, is the best course for those who are born in such a time to follow? There are many at the present day who will tell you that, in view of the progress of science and the results of critical enquiry, the only rational course is to adopt an Agnosticism, which gives up as hopeless the whole problem of religion; that is to say, all the great problems of human life and destiny. And there are others who will tell you that the only safe course is to shut your ears to every doubt and difficulty, and simply to adhere to every element in the faith. The former, guided by what I think a very narrow view of science, would bid you repudiate all the great heritage of religious thought and life which has been accumulated by all the labours and sacrifices of the past, because it centres in a belief for which, in their view, scientific evidence is wanting. They think, like Job's wife, that the difficulties which try our faith are a sufficient reason for renouncing it altogether. The latter would bid you follow Job's friends in simply reaffirming the forms of doctrine you have inherited, and refusing to pay

any regard to the new questions, which our new^{*} experience—the experience of a world which both in knowledge and action has been carried far beyond any previous generation—inevitably present for our consideration. Both these alternatives are counsels of despair, and they both lead to a narrowing of human life and thought; in the one case by a scepticism which gives up as hopeless all endeavour to throw light upon the ultimate meaning of our lives, and abandons all those beliefs in which the best of our race have found their greatest support and stimulus; in the other case by making our religion an adherence to the tradition of the past rather than an immediate living experience of the present. Now the spiritual life of man cannot, I believe, detach itself from its religious root without withering and decaying; but neither can it continue to exist without growing. Neither Scripture nor reason gives any encouragement to such a desperate alternative between “all” and “nothing,” between Agnosticism and a faith which is fixed once for all and has no possibility of growth. The Bible is the account of a religious life which grows in compass and depth from the beginning to the end of the sacred history, and which has not ceased to grow since the number of the Canonical Books has been completed. The central principle

'of religion, the faith in God as the Being who sustains the natural and moral order of our life, remains the same throughout, the same from the time of Job to our own. For us, as for Job, it is the greatest of all the supports of spiritual life to believe in the rational character of the system of things in which we are placed, or, in other words, in the wisdom and goodness of the power which manifests itself in our own life and in the life of the world. For us, as for him, the essence of religion lies in the simple elementary creed that there is a divine purpose in our existence, and that, if we make ourselves its servant and instrument, it will be well with us, but, if not, it will be ill with us. Now, as then, the great source of religious energy is to feel that the cause we serve is the good cause, and that the good cause is the cause of God. The simple consciousness expressed already in the song of Deborah, that the "stars in their courses fought against Sisera," that is, that the whole system of things is leagued against evil, and makes its ultimate triumph impossible, has been the great solace and support of religious men in all ages. But, on the other hand, I need hardly say that our ideas of what the good cause is, have greatly changed by the widening and deepening of man's spiritual life, by the increase of our knowledge

of each other and of the world we live in, and by the long and varied experience which has shown us how our well-being can, and how it cannot, be secured. What the best of men would now desire is not a simple apportionment of rewards and punishments according to individual or national deserts. They see more distinctly than Job did, that it is difficult for man to plead desert before God; and, on the other hand, what they seek is not merely rewards for the good and punishments for the wicked, but the deliverance of all men from the power of evil and the full development of all the capacities of mind and will, of intellect and character, with which they have been endowed. They have learned also to look upon men in a less individualistic way, to regard all men and nations as "members one of another," and to think that the highest good cannot be attained by any one, so long as there are many who are excluded from sharing in it. Finally, they have learnt that man is a very complex being, and yet that the different parts of his nature are so closely intertwined that it is impossible to secure his highest welfare, unless we pay regard to them all. In other words he must be raised intellectually, socially, economically, and even aesthetically, if his morality and religion are to be placed

upon a sound basis. Taking all these points into account, no one can doubt that the conceptions of men in the present day as to the ends of human life, the objects which they would desire, if possible, to attain, have grown wider and higher than those of the greatest and best men in the past. We know, or at least we have the opportunity of learning if we listen to the wisest and noblest voices of our time, what the good cause is, as no generation before us knew it. Can we believe, with anything like the same ardent faith that supported the men of an earlier day, that it is the cause of God, and, therefore, the cause that must in the end triumph over every power that can oppose it?

Now it cannot be denied that in some ways the difficulties of such a faith have increased upon us with the enlarging of our knowledge of nature and of man. Tennyson speaks of the difficulty of believing that "Love is Creation's law" when

"Nature, red in tooth and claw

With ravine, shrieks against his creed."

The endless sufferings of the animal creation—sufferings which they inflict upon each other, and which, indeed, in the struggle for existence they are obliged to inflict upon each other,—are apt to seem to us unnecessary and unjust. And when we see the same struggle and the same

suffering continued in the life of man, when we consider the conflict of individuals and the wars of nations with all the nameless horrors they have brought upon each other through the whole course of history, an even deeper shadow seems to be cast upon our faith. How, we are apt to ask, can wrong and injustice, envy and hate, work out the righteousness of God? Even our best civilisation at times seems only to put a decent covering over the vices of men; and if, on calmer consideration, we reject such a pessimistic view of things and recognise the great value of the kind of life which has been made possible for many classes of men, yet we are forced to admit that there are multitudes, and even whole races, who as yet have little share in the best part of the heritage of humanity. And when we look to individual cases, it is as difficult for us as it was for Job, to trace an adaptation of the circumstances of life to personal merits or personal needs.

All these and many other difficulties we have to recognise, as involving questions which we cannot answer directly, and which indeed in individual cases we cannot hope to answer at all. And if we insist on a full answer to them as the condition of our belief in any divine order of life such as Christianity has

taught us to look for, it is impossible that we should be satisfied. Have we then a right in the face of such difficulties to assume, as Job in his darkest moments assumes, that there is a divine power to which we can appeal? Still more, have we a right to believe, as Job at the end of the poem seems to be taught to believe, that that divine power has a wider plan, governed by absolute justice and goodness, into which our own sufferings and trials are taken up as elements, and to which, if we could understand it, the darkest facts of our existence would be seen to be subordinated? Have we a right, as rational beings, to maintain that there is such a solution to all our difficulties, and, therefore, to adhere to the conviction, that there is a divine order and a divine purpose realising itself in the history of the world and even in the events of our own lives? Is this assuming what cannot be verified, until all our difficulties are actually solved?

I would answer that it is not so. This is not the time to give the philosophical reasons for maintaining that the world we live in is a spiritual world—a divine order, the source of which is akin to the principle of intelligence in our own souls. I will only say here that I think it can be shown that our whole nature, and the conditions of our existence, and indeed every

rational thought we think and every rational act we do, implies that it is so. Such an argument, however, is beyond the scope of this address; and here it will be better for me to follow another line of thought which is suggested by the Book of Job itself. For not only is it true, as I have already suggested, that, through many influences, of which Christianity is the chief, our conceptions of what is really good and desirable for mankind have grown much wider and deeper than they ever were before, but also we have far better grounds than were given to Job, or could be given to any of his contemporaries, to believe in the wisdom and goodness of the divine power which orders our lives. The answer given to Job's difficulties in the poem was to point to the grandeur of nature, the wonderful gifts God has bestowed upon His creatures, and the provision He has made for their wants, and then to ask Job whether he could not trust the Being who "made all that."

But if Job could reasonably be asked to look beyond his personal sorrows to the great system of things in which his life was a part, and to see in it the proof of a higher wisdom and bounty to which he might well trust his individual fate, how much more is given to us to meet the difficulties in which we are involved! Not only

do we know a great deal more about the wonders of nature, which seemed so overpowering to the writer of the poem, but we know, as he could not, that it is a system of law and order which has no caprice in it. And we are learning to recognise that it is not only an order of existence, but also an order of development,—a conception which, though it cannot clear away all our difficulties as to the existence of pain, yet contains an answer to some of them by suggesting a purpose which such pain may subserve, both in the individual life and the life of the race. But this is a comparatively unimportant thing in comparison with the fact that we are able to trace, at least in its general outlines, a great process of development in human life, by which—in spite of their errors and crimes, and, even in a sense, by means of them and of the recoil of their own souls against them—mankind have been raised, and are being raised, towards a higher intellectual and moral condition. The Bible, as I have already said, is a wonderful record of religious progress, from the simple tribal religion of Abraham, through the national worship of the God of Israel, up to the universality of the Christian faith. And we are now in a position to trace the progress of man both farther backwards and farther forwards, and to see how

influences from India, and Greece, and Rome have coalesced with what may be called the main stream of Christianity, to lift men to a higher plane of existence. Christianity has taught us to discern in human nature, even in the meanest forms, the possibility of union with God, and many of the followers of Christ have shown how that possibility can be realised. Christ once said that if He were lifted up, He would draw all men unto Him, and no one who has lived in close fellowship with a really good man can doubt the almost marvellous power of goodness to awake its like in others. Again, what Christianity whispered in the ears of men—that the gain of each is the gain of all and the loss of each is the loss of all, and that this applies not only to families and nations but to all mankind—that lesson is now beginning to be proclaimed on the house-tops: for the increasing communication and intercourse of men with each other is gradually causing them to realise, slowly and almost in spite of themselves, that if one member suffers all the others must suffer with him. At least we can say that good men are realising more than ever they did before the solidarity of mankind, the duty of aiding and protecting the poor and the weak and of endeavouring to lift those who are ignorant and vicious above the darkness amid

which, as Christ has told us, they know not what they do.

It may, indeed, be said that this is merely that raising of the ideal of which I have already spoken, that this ideal is as yet very feebly operative except in the minds of a few, and that the traces of its actual realisation in politics and trade, in the social and intellectual life of the world, are yet very scanty: and we must to a considerable extent admit the objection. The spectacle of human weakness and passion, which we see on every side in the world, will not permit us to indulge in an easy optimism. But no one should allow it to make him blind to the real progress that has been made. The raising of the ideal of human life itself is a great step in such progress; it is the awakening of those powers which in the long run must produce their own realisation. It is apt to make us under-estimate what has been achieved; but this very dissatisfaction with the present is the condition of every great effort to improve man's estate. And if it be true that the aims of the wisest and best of our race are higher than they have ever been before, we may fairly see in this the prophecy of a better future.

I am anxious not to overstate what has been, or can be ascertained, by those who desire, not to

feed themselves with illusive hopes, but to see what life and experience are really teaching us. But I believe that no one who tries impartially to consider the facts, which I have rather indicated than described, will fail to see that the rational grounds of faith in the wisdom and goodness of the divine power, which is manifesting itself both without and within us, have immensely increased in volume with the advance of time, not only beyond what was attainable in the age of Job, but beyond what has been attainable in any previous age of the world. We cannot, indeed, hope to see, except very dimly, how good is realising itself in the individual lot of ourselves or other men, or even to perceive such realisation in the immediate events of our time, of which we necessarily have a biassed and partial view, any more than Job could see it in his own fortunes. This is just the region in which we need faith to bear us up against the darkness in life. But a wider outlook which takes in the various points I have spoken of—our greater knowledge of the possibilities of human nature, the light thrown by Christianity, and, we may add, by the history of man's development, on the uses of pain and sacrifice and on the irresistible power of goodness, where it is genuine; and, last not least, the slow but sure upward movement

that seems to run through all nature and human history—such a wider outlook goes far to show that the faith itself is a thoroughly rational faith. Indeed, I think it may be proved to belong to the very nature of reason. It is a reasonable faith, and, I may add, it is a thoroughly practical faith: for it means that, whatever labours or sacrifices they may undergo in the service of humanity, men are fellow-workers with God, ministers of a cause which in the end must triumph, because it is the cause of God. How, indeed, whatsoever any one of us may be able to do in furthering this cause will come back in blessing to the doer, either in this world or another, how love returns upon him that gives it forth, we cannot fully know, nor can our eyes penetrate the shadows of death that bound our earthly vision. But that darkness, we can see, is what is necessary, not only for the trial of our faith, but also for the development of our character. And if we are able to believe in God, we can trust Him with our fate; for He is “not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

On the other hand, I think that the poem of Job contains another lesson for us, as students, in these days of criticism and discussion. It is that true religion goes with that thorough intellectual integrity which does not seek to blink

any difficulty or to hide from itself any reasonable ground of doubt. It can hold firmly to that faith in the wisdom and goodness of God, the meaning of which has been progressively revealed to us by Judaism and Christianity, and, indeed, by all the spiritual life of mankind in the past; but it will not fear to acknowledge any of the facts of life or any of the discoveries of science or criticism, which seem to run counter to the particular forms with which that belief may have been associated in the past. Rather, it will be ready to search such difficulties to the bottom, in the confidence that, even if it has to reconsider some of these forms, it will in the end find some deeper and wider form in which its hope and faith can be vindicated and expressed. "He that believeth will not make haste." He will recognise that religion is a living and a growing thing, and that the very difficulties which try us most are the means whereby our thoughts of God and man are widened and deepened. He will reject at once the counsel of those who, at the shaking or disproof of any of the elements of the creed they have inherited, are ready at once to give up all belief in God and spiritual things; and also the counsel of those who, like Job's friends, protect their belief by shutting their ears to all difficulty, or even by the distortion of

facts that cannot be denied. He will, like Job himself, seek to combine the steadfastness of heart that clings firmly to the essential faith, which is at the root of all spiritual life, with that willingness to learn from new experiences, with that openness of mind to the signs of the times, which Christ declared to be the mark of a character free from hypocrisy. For it is to one who is thus at once firm in faith and sincere in his allegiance to the truth that the voice of God will speak—if not from the whirlwind and the earthquake, yet in that still small voice which will enable him to understand his own life and the life of the world.

